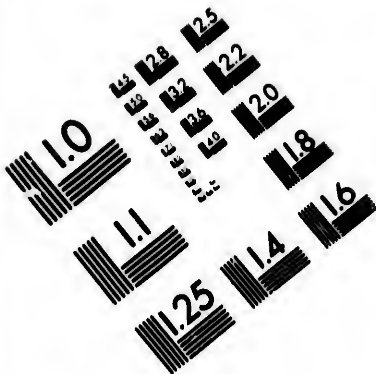
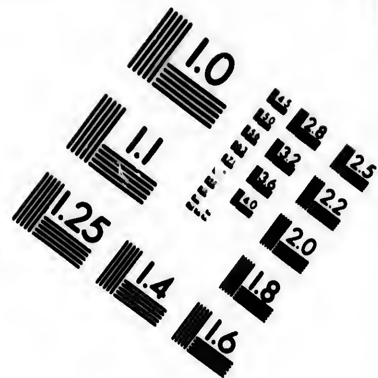

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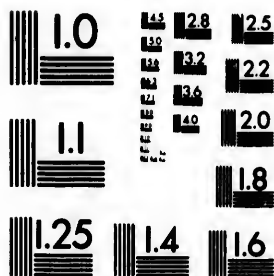
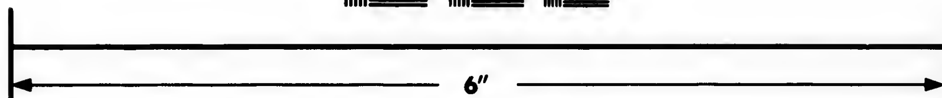
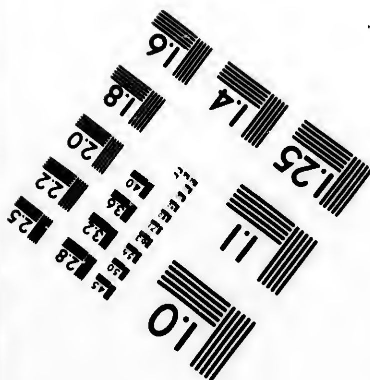

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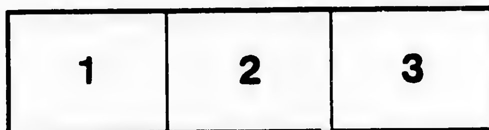

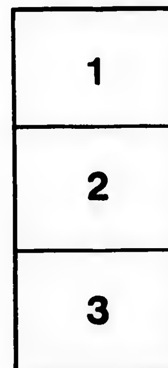

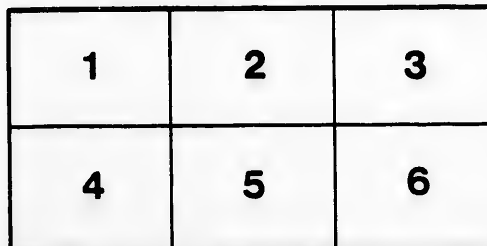

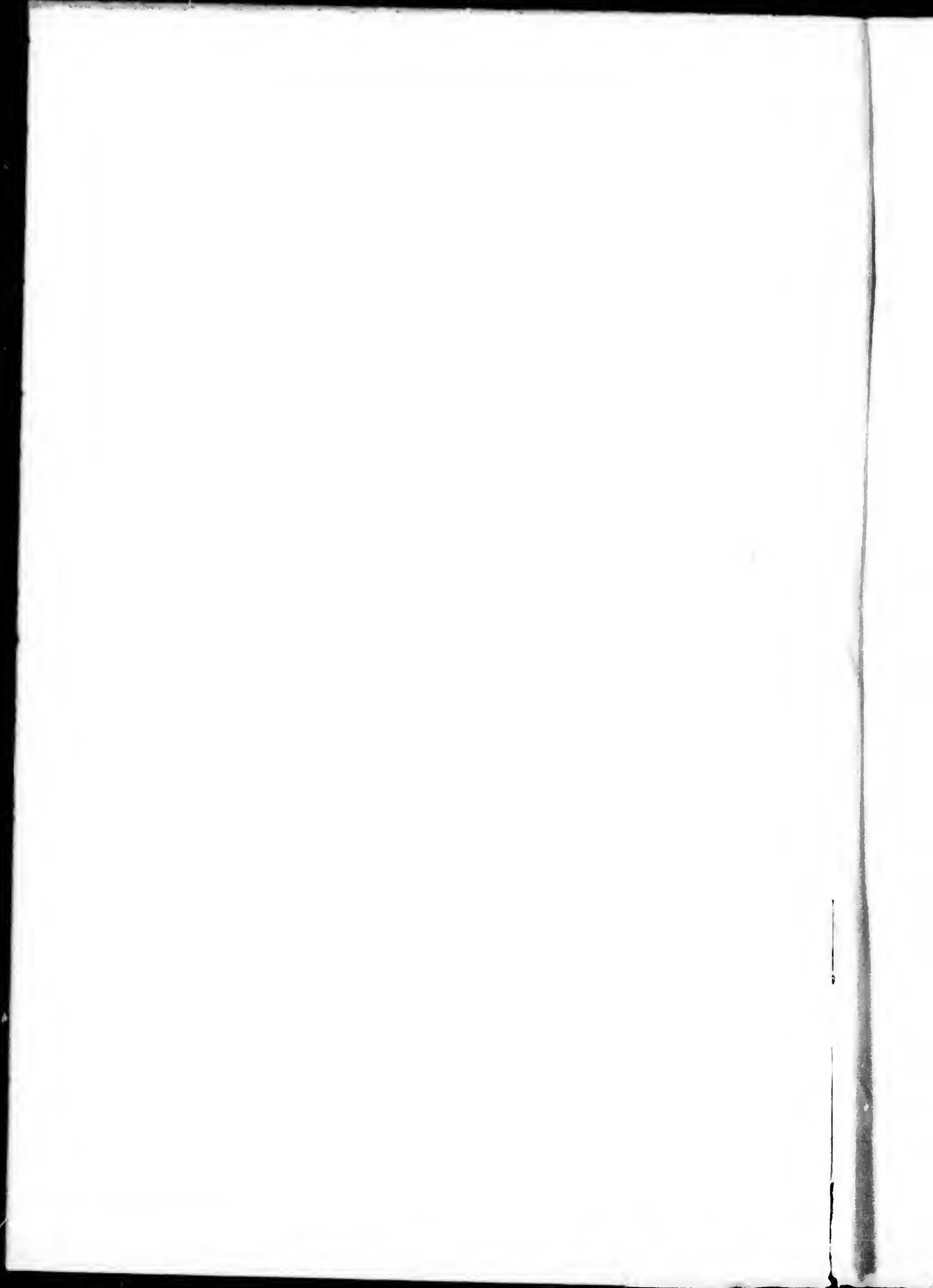

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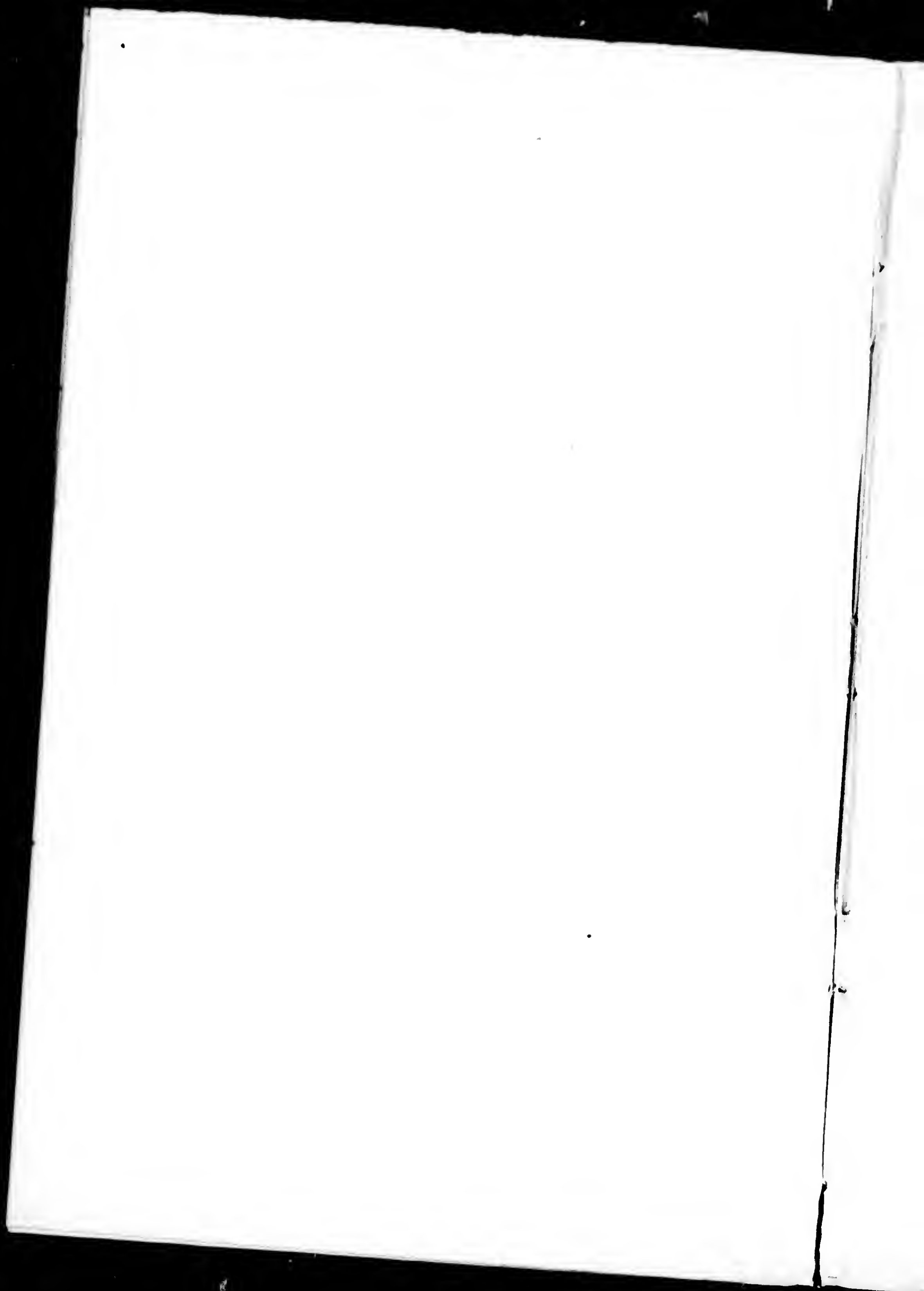

A SOLDIER OF MANHATTAN

AND

HIS ADVENTURES
AT TICONDEROGA AND QUEBEC

BY

JOSEPH A. ALTSHELER

AUTHOR OF "THE SUN OF SARATOGA"

LONDON
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15, WATERLOO PLACE
1898

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A SOLDIER OF MANHATTAN.

CHAPTER I.

A QUESTION OF MERIT.

I WAS Lieutenant Edward Charteris, of a very good family in the City of New York, and I saw no reason why I should take his insolence.

"There was Braddock," I said, putting a queen upon the table.

His eyes were bent down upon his cards, and his cheeks were too ruddy to flush much. How red these English are!

"It was a cheat," he said, taking the trick with his king. "We are not foxes to lie hid in thickets and forests and wait there for victims."

"But in a country of thickets and forests one must learn to do it, nevertheless, or he has no right to complain when he loses," I said.

The trick was mine this time, and I stacked the captured cards neatly before me. We had been speaking of Fort William Henry, and the great disaster there.

"You can't talk, gentlemen, and play the game too;

we are not women," said Culverhouse, who wished to prevent a quarrel.

Culverhouse was my friend. Unlike most Englishmen, he did not seek to patronize us who were of the colonies, merely because we were of the colonies; but I had no mind to be put down, and I kept my attention upon Spencer.

"Promise is not performance," he said, leading with an ace. "You Americans criticize us much, but what have you, in your turn, done against the French?"

"There was Dieskau's defeat at Lake George, our one victory of the war—a victory that saved Albany and nobody knows what else," I said, following his lead.

"Sir William Johnson won that," he said, curling his upper lip a little. "An Englishman by birth, I believe."

"An Irishman," I said; "and he spent the day in his tent. His soldiers, who were Americans, won the battle. They did the fighting, not Sir William."

The loungers in the coffee-house had been listening attentively. One of them hummed—

"Their Dieskau we from them detain,
While Canada aloud complains
And counts the numbers of their slain
And makes a dire complaint."

It was the beginning of a bad verse—not much rhyme in it, that I could ever see—but it was very popular in our time, and it fitted the case.

"Attend to the game, gentlemen!" said Graham, the Scotchman, who made the fourth of our party, a hare-

brained fellow, but, like Culverhouse, not wanting a quarrel just then. "You are lagging in your play."

The loungers in the coffee house had formed a circle around us at the sound of our words, which betokened a possible quarrel, and loungers love a quarrel in which they are not concerned. I was sorry for the moment I had come into the place, though I had not expected such an issue of it. Mynheer Steenwyck, our host, looked anxious, as if he feared for the fate of his bottles and tankards, and rubbed his fat Dutch chin uneasily. Through the window which faced me I could see the merchants of Hanover Square, many with their coats off, busy among their bales and packages, which half blocked the street. Perhaps, after all, it is they, and not the generals, who make a country great.

"Lieutenant Charteris has accused the English soldiers," said Spencer, as if justifying himself to his brother officers.

"Lieutenant Spencer first accused the American soldiers," I said.

"And yet the English have come over here to defend the Americans," said Spencer, raising his voice a little.

"May Heaven defend us from our defenders, so I have heard Mr. Oliver de Lancey say when they tried to billet the soldiers upon him," I replied.

Spencer's eyes sparkled with anger, and he was preparing to make a fierce reply; but Culverhouse, still in the *rôle* of peacemaker, spoke first.

"It seems to me," he said, "that both English and Americans who serve the same King should be the best

of friends and allies. Of a certainty, the French have given enough for both to do, so far. You are a soldier of the King, Lieutenant Spencer, and so are you, Lieutenant Charteris."

Whether his words would have stopped us I do not know, but at that moment I heard cries outside. I had heard a hum or distant murmur before, but paid no attention, thinking it was the ordinary noise of a busy town, such as ours. Now it was much nearer and louder.

"I think it is a street affray, and perhaps a serious one!" cried Culverhouse, seizing the opportunity to put a stop to our affair. "Come, gentlemen, we will see what it is!"

He grasped me by the arm, and half dragged me to the door. Any suspicion of my courage was saved, as the others, incited by curiosity, came too. The loungers crowded after us.

A crowd of men and boys, many of villainous look, had gathered about a man and a woman in the street, and were shouting at them curses, and other abuse as bad.

"Stone the French spy! Kill him!" they cried.

I could see over the crowd the head of the man whom they threatened. A face almost as dark as that of an Indian, but the darkness of weather, and not of nature, a fierce, curved nose, blue eyes, and very black hair—the whole a leonine countenance. He looked disdainfully at the crowd, and said something in the French tongue. Though I understood the language, I did not

catch the words. The men and boys around him continued their abuse. I understood the trouble at once. We were very bitter then against the French, who, with their Indian allies, had committed many atrocities upon our border people.

A boy stooped, picked up a stone, and made ready to hurl it at the Frenchman. I sprang into the street, and knocked the missile from his hand. Then I drew my sword, and ordered the mob to scatter, illustrating the command with several flourishes of the weapon. Unarmed men do not like the naked edge of a sword, and they fell back to a respectful distance, giving us a full view of the Frenchman and his companion, whom I guessed at once to be his daughter. She had the same black hair and blue eyes, which is in woman, I think, a combination as striking and beautiful, as it is rare. But where his face was as dark as leather, hers was as fair as the white rose.

While I was looking at her, the Frenchman was thanking me, though with much dignity.

I introduced myself briefly in the French language, as Lieutenant Edward Charteris, of the King's army.

"I am Raymond de St. Maur, of Quebec," he said, "and this is my daughter, Mlle. Louise de St. Maur."

I bowed, and she returned my bow in much the same manner as her father. The incident had brought a very bright flush into her cheeks, but I could not say that she showed fright. I said, with the politeness of our times, that it was a happiness and honour for me to have served them so opportunely.

" Is it one of the chief duties of your officers to protect guests from your own citizens?" asked M. de St. Maur, not at all moved by my compliment.

I did not reply directly, but introduced Culverhouse and the others, who had followed up my attack upon the mob. We offered to escort them to their house or wherever they might be going.

" We are the guests of Mr. Kennedy, your townsman," said Mlle. de St. Maur, speaking for her father, and showing more graciousness than he, "and will thank you to protect us on our way there."

M. de St. Maur, though yet very haughty of countenance, did not refuse the offered escort. The mob had gone further down the square, but had not disappeared.

I led the way. I knew the Kennedy mansion very well, and likewise its owner, Archibald Kennedy, who, as all the world has heard, married Ann, Robert Watt's handsome daughter, and became the Earl of Cassilis. Noticing that the old man and the girl looked around them with great curiosity, I began to point out the buildings of interest and note, in which our city abounds, if I do say it myself, and led them a somewhat devious way that I might prolong the journey, for I will admit that this French girl with the blue eyes and black hair attracted me much.

I took them by the Royal Exchange, a spacious and noble structure, completed but two years before, and showed them the merchants and factors passing in such numbers and importance through the arcades that one

might think it was London itself, so great had grown the trade of our port.

I had friends there—my own family is not so bad—and an attendant took us up to the noble Long Room, where the great dinners and entertainments are given. Then we passed out under the arcades and again through the busy press of merchants. I described some of them, and told to what an amazing extent their operations had grown, how they bought furs and skins from the most distant Indians, even from those around the furthest of the Great Lakes, how they carried on a fine trade with the West Indies, and what a traffic passed between us and England, and how we had even begun to build ships.

"Can you show such merchants as those in Quebec?" I asked of M. de St. Maur, making no effort to conceal my pride in our city's opulence.

"No; but we can show better soldiers," he replied, with some dryness, as in truth he had a right to do, since the French, on the whole, had been beating us most lamentably.

But he had no criticism to make upon the noble spire of St. George's Chapel, which, I hear, will compare very favourably with the great spires of Europe, and of which we are justly proud. Moreover, I long enjoyed the acquaintance of its rector, that distinguished and pious man, the Rev. Henry Barclay, who married the daughter of Anthony Rutgers.

I also showed them our first engine-house, which was thought to be a marvel in its way, very few people

having dreamed that such an ingenious contrivance for putting out destructive fires was possible. It was near twenty years old then, and stood in Broad Street, next to the watchhouse. I think the seigneur was somewhat puzzled by the engines, as, in fact, I was a bit myself, but neither of us said so.

I showed them our notable market just above the ferry across the Hudson, where the people came over from the Jerseys, and where the line of waggons filled with the produce of the farms was sometimes a full eighth of a mile in length.

I succeeded so well in monopolizing the conversation of Mlle. de St. Maur, who showed a pretty wit and much knowledge, that Culverhouse and the others began to frown at me and seek my place. But I held my own, and continued to talk to mademoiselle, pointing out this place and that, until we reached the house of Mr. Kennedy, a noble mansion on Broadway, very wide and handsome of front, with a splendid carved doorway in the centre.

The seigneur, who, I perceived, had learned the stoicism of the Indians, would not allow himself to be impressed by anything, or at least he would not permit the appearance of it. He looked very closely about him, but there was no expression upon his strong, brown face. But when they walked up the stoop of Mr. Kennedy's house, and he turned to dismiss us, he thanked us again with that fine, large courtesy which we associate with the great French seigneur.

"A Norman, I think," said Culverhouse, as we walked

away together, Spencer and Graham having bid us adieu and gone in another direction.

I thought so too. It seemed fitting to me that his great stature and eagle face should belong to the race which took England and gave it the blood of which it boasts the loudest. Which stock on the French side, I may add, also has given us the most trouble.

"What is he, and what is he doing here?" I asked of Culverhouse, who knew the gossip of the town, while I had arrived but recently from duty at Albany.

"He is one of the great seigneurs of Canada," replied Culverhouse, "and he has come here on behalf of Montcalm to treat with Loudoun for an exchange of prisoners. The earl having finished his cabbage-planting at Halifax, may now be able to attend somewhat to the war."

Culverhouse spoke with bitterness. Never was there a greater laggard than our commander-in-chief, and it was as galling to the English officers, his brethren, as it was to us, whom he said he came to protect. The earl was but a day back from Halifax, where he had nobly earned the title of cabbage-planter, and we were wondering what garden he would cultivate next. Coming back from Halifax, when off the Massachusetts shore, he had received a message from Governor Shirley, sent out in a small boat, giving the dreadful news from William Henry. So he had arrived in New York, telling, ere his foot had scarce touched the landing, of the terrible things he was going to have done to M. Montcalm, how he had sent a message to Webb to chase the impudent Frenchman back to Canada, and how he

was expecting even then to hear that his general had destroyed the French army.

After Culverhouse's little outburst, we were silent, thinking of our campaign, which had little cheer for us, despite the earl's magnificent promises, and when Culverhouse left me, I went to my lodgings, where my thoughts ranged from the war to Mlle. de St. Maur's blue eyes and Marion Arthur's brown ones, and then back to the blue. I was wondering that very morning if I were about to fall in love with Marion Arthur. Never having been in love before, I could not be sure. I had often noted the symptoms in others, but I have also observed that a doctor who may be very skilled in the diseases of others, knows little about his own. But Marion and I had been comrades in childhood, for she was my cousin, though three times removed.

CHAPTER II.

AN UNSOUGHT INTERVIEW.

I WAS in the midst of such thoughts and surmises when John Smoot came and told me that his master, Mr. Arthur, wished to see me. John's manner was darkly important, and I guessed that the business which Mr. Arthur wished to have with me would not be of a very soothing nature. Some strain in our relations had appeared long since, and it was increased by his suspicion that I sought Marion for a wife—a suspicion and a dissent that were very far from keeping me from her. Even before that morning I would stop and wonder if in truth I were about to fall in love with her, and then I would cease to study the problem and leave its solution to the future. But I was compelled to admit that she was very fair. There was no girl of the de Lanceys, or the de Peysters, or the Livingstons, or the Philipses, or the Kennedys, or the Coldens, or of all the boasted beauties of our town, who could surpass her.

Moreover, it was a matter of common repute in New York that Mr. Arthur looked for something beyond the colonies for his daughter. His father had been born in

the old country, and he had been sent there himself to be educated and to receive the English stamp, his aptness at the learning being so great that he had ever remained a mighty stickler for the glory and the grandeur and the ways of England. He affected sometimes to cheapen his own country and the people who were his countrymen, which caused many ill remarks to be made about him, for we had begun to raise our heads in America. There were so many officers of high rank and noble birth coming over then from Britain to engage in the great war with the French that I was quite sure Mr. Arthur would seek to make an engagement between his daughter and one of them. He placed high value upon rank, and his wealth was sufficient to prepare the way for an alliance of that kind. That he had some such thought in his mind when he sent for me I did not doubt.

Bidding John to tell him that I would be there speedily, I prepared for the interview, arranging my toilet with great care, which I hold always to be the duty of a gentleman.

I wore my new uniform of the Royal Americans, which was a very pretty affair, and confidence in one's clothes imparts great strength to the backbone. So I went on, walking with a martial stride, and swinging my sword until I made it jingle gallantly in its scabbard.

The front part of Mr. Arthur's establishment was used as a warehouse. There was a great muck of boxes and barrels about, and a dozen stout fellows

were at work among them. It was said that Mr. Arthur, when the times were more given to peace, sent every year a rich store of goods into the Spanish and French West India Islands, contrary to the laws and regulations of their Catholic Majesties, the august sovereigns of Spain and France. But that was not a matter about which I bothered myself, nor in truth did any one else, for no merchant in the town was held to be a more respectable man than Mr. Arthur, who had acquired, in the course of many years, a great fortune and a most acrid port-wine temper.

I asked for Mr. Arthur, and one of the fellows, with undue curtness, I thought, when my martial appearance is considered, directed me to the office in the rear.

Mr. Arthur was writing at his desk. Two candles, burning directly in front of him, for the twilight comes early in our latitudes, heightened the ruddy tints of his face and deepened the lines about his mouth. Remembering that if he had anything disagreeable to say it might be well to let him know that I was prepared, I jingled my sword again. The sound aroused him from his task, as well it might, for it was a most military clatter. He turned around, and looked at me in a very critical manner. I kept my hand upon my sword and expanded my chest somewhat, but Mr. Arthur did not seem to be very much impressed.

"Ah! it is Master Edward Charteris, I believe," he said in an exceedingly dry tone.

"It is," I replied, "and I am now a lieutenant in the army of his Britannic Majesty."

As I said this I jingled my sword for the third time and threw my shoulders very far back, in order to keep myself from looking that degree of littleness which I felt. I liked not his manner at all. It was patronizing, which I resented, for our branch of the family, though not so well sugared with riches as his, was as good and of equal repute in all the country.

But my bearing, which I thought Marion—and the new French girl, too, for that matter—would have admired, seemed to have no effect upon this crusty old merchant. Accordingly, I stood upon my dignity, and waited in silence to hear what he might have to say.

"I inferred from your apparel," he said in a tone of some satire, "that you had become an officer in the service of our King. Be sure that you wear worthily the livery of his Majesty, our most gracious sovereign."

"I do not need that advice," I said, with a little heat. I had heard so much of our most gracious sovereign recently that I was growing tired of him and his graciousness.

"It is just as well to give it," he replied. "All young men are the better for good counsel, though they may not relish it in the telling."

I felt an increase of resentment. But I was under some obligations to him. He was my nearest relative left alive, and perhaps I owed a little to his care, though I doubted not, knowing his nature, that he had made a good profit out of it. So I said nothing.

"I sent for you," he said, "because I have heard something about you to-day."

"Nothing to my discredit, I hope," I said lightly.

"Something very much to your discredit," he said, with great gravity of manner. "I hear that you have been insulting the officers of the King in a coffee-house, and even fastening a quarrel upon them. I hear also that you have spoken in the most disloyal manner of our noble sovereign and the generals whom he has sent over to protect us from the French and their allies."

I haven't much reverence for kings; I have never been able to discover in all my reading of history that they deserve it. I cared little, therefore, for his charge of disloyalty, but I felt the flush of anger when he accused me of forcing a quarrel upon the British officers, when I believed that I had been in the right. I said as much, telling him that some one had brought him a false report. I added, moreover, that I would not be patronized by any Englishman, nor did I think that any one in the colonies should so humble himself.

"Ah!" he said, speaking more slowly than before; "I have heard much lately about the fine airs the people in the colonies are giving themselves. It seems that what I have heard is true."

"You are one of us yourself," I replied.

"By the accident of birth, yes," he said, and his heightened tones showed that my shaft had touched a tender spot, "but in spirit, no. I have always accounted myself an Englishman born on a foreign shore, and I shall return to the land which nourished my ancestors. I intend that my daughter shall marry there."

I had nothing to say to these declarations, which he made with some pomposity of manner. His allusion to his daughter and my silence seemed to bring him back to the main subject which he had in mind when he sent for me.

"I wished to speak to you of two things, Lieutenant Charteris," he said; "one is your deportment toward the officers from England, which is offensive to me, and the other is in regard to my daughter. You and she of necessity have been thrown much together, and the liking between you must go no further. As I said, I shall make a home in England, and I intend that my daughter shall marry there. I warn you for your own benefit."

This was plain speaking to a certainty. I was not aware, as I have said, that I was in love with Marion, though there had been some little gossip in the town that it would be a fitting match. I scarce knew whether to be angry or amused. I resolved to draw him out, and see what further he had to say.

"Then you object to me because I am not an Englishman?" I said.

"That is one among my several reasons."

"At least I shall never try to become an Englishman."

"Let us be grateful that we are spared that much-wasted effort."

"Nor would I become one if I could. I shall remain true to my own country."

"Your high-flown sentiments sound very well in the

mouth of a young man, but we can dispense with them at present."

"You are bent upon having Marion marry among the English?" I asked.

"And what if I am?" he asked sharply.

"She might prefer one of her countrymen," I said.

"I trust that she has judgment and discretion," he replied.

I would have been very humble indeed not to be angered by his sneers at me and my countrymen, and, as I turned to leave, I could not refrain from discharging an arrow at him.

"Do not forget one thing, Mr. Arthur," I said. "Though you may call yourself an Englishman, the English themselves will never call you such."

His countenance fell a little, but in a moment he said, without any change of tone—

"I bid you good day, Master Charteris. I wish you a noble career in the King's service."

I made no reply, but left full of wrath at his high and haughty treatment of me, as I believe I had a right to be. I was thinking angrily about this, and such was my state of mind that I failed to notice where I was walking after I reached the street, and nearly ran over one of our townsmen. He brought me to myself with a jerk, and peered into my face by the light of one of the street lanterns that hung near.

"It's Master Edward Charteris, eh?" he said; "prowling about and trying to run down decent citizens in the street! I took you at first, with your fine

uniform and clanking sword, to be one of those young Hotspurs from over seas, who talk so much and do so little. But perhaps such as you have been corrupted by them with their swaggering airs and loud oaths."

It was Master Martin Groot, a most respectable man, with a fine soul for a bargain, but an inveterate grumbler. I made my apologies in the best style I could command, and would have gone on, but he held to my arm.

"There is no occasion for hurry, lad," he said. "I forgive you for running over me, for I verily believe you did not see where you were going. Your uniform is very fine—a pretty sum it must have cost!—and becomes you; but there is trouble in your face. What is it, lad? Is it something about these gay English cock-sparrows, who are always going to beat the French, and who are always getting beaten?"

"No," I said hastily, and somewhat impatiently; "I have no trouble at all, Master Martin."

"I don't believe you," he said bluntly. "Two and twenty does not have such a face as that for nothing."

A sympathetic tone in the man's voice kept me from being angry; but I could not tell him what really ailed me. I was not sure that it was anything. I made an evasive reply. I was worried about the war, I said. I wondered why we shilly-shallied so long in New York instead of going to the front and displaying the same activity that was so characteristic of our enemies, and which accounted for their notable successes.

"That may or may not be," he said, a doubtful look on his broad face. "But I never knew the fate of a campaign to rest with such mighty weight upon one so young before. I am a peaceful man, and even a man of wisdom, Master Charteris, a trader in search of gain, not glory; but, now that you wear the King's uniform, I give you a warning. Beware of the officers who have been sent over seas to help us and but despise us—an idle, empty, and worthless set. They corrupt our youth with their drinkings and their dancings and their debaucheries, and do not protect our borders from the French. The land were well rid of them!"

He took his grip from my arm and let me pass. My wearing of the King's uniform had caused me to receive two warnings within the hour, and it was not difficult for me to say which was the kindlier of the two. But I thought that Groot went to extremities. He was always a dogmatic man. Nor did he love the English any the more because he had no English blood in his veins. He was overfond of saying that his Dutch forefathers should have held New Amsterdam, in which I did not agree with him, for I could respect the liberty and might of England without cheapening mine own country.

I suppose it was perversity, but, having been warned not to pay my addresses to Marion, I decided that I would call upon the maiden.

I walked briskly toward Mr. Arthur's fine house in Queen Street, near the mansions of William Walton and Abraham de Peyster, which have been considered

worthy of much praise, and found Marion in the rose garden.

"You have something to tell me!" she said, with a pert air. I dare say a look of importance was upon my face.

"Of a certainty," I said lightly. "Your father has just told me that he intends for you to marry an Englishman. He did not say that he preferred one with a title, but he hinted as much. He wants you to be 'my lady,' with a train of servants, and a husband who can take you to court."

"That would be famous," said Marion, a gratified look showing on her pretty countenance. "Truly it would, to have many servants and to go to court. Oh, I should like so dearly to go to court!"

I was a little piqued, though I was far from having the right to feel so. It was not for me to dictate her preferences.

"So you would like to be a great lady?" I asked.

"In truth, I would!" she exclaimed. "What woman would not?"

I knew of none, and I turned the talk to the fashions and festivities of the day, of which we had great plenty in New York, and at the end of an agreeable hour I left, sure that her crusty old father would have been very wrathful had he known that directly after receiving his warning, I had gone to see his daughter. There was pleasure in the thought. I am not ashamed of it; therefore I admit it.

CHAPTER III.

A GLIMPSE OF THE GENERAL.

But when I was in the street alone, my mind returned to more serious things, and my spirits fell again. I regretted the quarrel with Spencer, for it was like to be renewed, though as sure as ever that I had been in the right.

Not wishing to return just then to my quarters, I strolled about in the cool of the evening. Ours always had been a lively town, but the turmoil of the war and the presence of the soldiery and the dignitaries had caused an exceeding great bustle lately. The arrival of night scarce served to diminish it. The number of street lanterns had been doubled, and the number of night watchmen too, for that matter, as the coming of the soldiers caused much disorder, and there had been many broils. It was only the other day that I had heard some of our most respected burghers complaining of the bad effect the presence of the military had on public morals.

There was a crowd in the streets, and soldiers were straying about the Battery. Several of the military people showed signs of intoxication. I wondered at

this laxity of discipline, for I had read much in the books about the art of war, and I found them all agreed that strict rules and an enforced obedience to them were the ingredients of success. Now when I was confronted with the reality, I found the difference between it and what I had expected so great that I was puzzled to account for it. Nor did it comfort me to observe two or three of our own New York soldiers among the roisterers. I thought that at a time when our arms had experienced such ill success everywhere it would be mightily gratifying to the home people for our own colonial soldiers to set a good example.

Two soldiers approached me. One was in the uniform of the British grenadiers. The other wore the dress of a New York regiment. They had their arms about each other's shoulders, and they were reeling along the path. I do not know whether they embraced because of drunken affection or to keep from falling down in a lump. As they drew near me they began to sing a ribald camp song.

I stepped back into the shadow of some trees, as I did not wish to be annoyed by drunken men. But my movement was too late. The gleam of my uniform caught the Englishman's eye.

"'Ello!" he cried. "A horficer! Come, horficer, and 'ave a drink with us!"

"Yes," said the American, "come and join 'Merican and English soldiers and gentlemen. Treat you as if you were the King himself. You're an officer, but we're not proud. We'll drink with you, and let you pay the score!"

"Pass on!" I said in disgust. "I will report you to your regiments, and you will both be lucky if you escape the cat o' nine tails."

"What a horficer 'e is!" exclaimed the Englishman, pretending to be very much frightened, "and 'ow 'e used to set the French and the Haustrians and the Dons a-running! One look at 'im was enough for 'em. General, we give you our best compliments, and 'opes you are in werry good 'ealth."

Arm-in-arm they stood stiffly erect before me. Then they pulled off their caps and bowed so low that they were unable to return to the perpendicular, and fell over in a heap. I left them there, a struggling mixture of arms and legs and shoulders, from which confusion came a medley of English and American oaths.

I turned my course over toward the East River, and gazed at the twinkling lights on Long Island, where some of our soldiers had gone, and where it was reported Loudoun intended to make a fortified camp for the defence of the continent.

Presently Culverhouse came to me there. He, too, he said, in the absence of anything better to do, had been strolling about, and, seeing me staring over the water as if I were moonstruck, had joined me. I had not known Culverhouse long, but we had become very good friends. Though his military rank corresponded to mine, he was two or three years my senior, and had seen a good bit of life in the great European world, with the stories of which he often entertained me. Besides, there was so much that was frank and honest

in Culverhouse's nature that it was much easier to like than to dislike him.

"Watching the proposed encampment, eh, Charteris?" he said. "Well, we can send a fine body of troops over there, but it seems to me our commanders could put them to better use. It scarce becomes us to wait here in New York for the French to attack us."

There was a touch of bitterness in his tone. The shameless waste of time was the source of much vexation to the younger officers, and it was a comfort to speak of our grievances.

"We have fared badly enough in the war," I said, "but suppose Montcalm were to have Loudoun's abundance of resources and Loudoun were forced to endure Montcalm's dearth of men, money, and material?"

"Why, then," said Culverhouse, "King George would have to abandon claim to the last foot of soil on this Western continent. But our luck is not so bad as that. Perhaps we will go to the front some day, and then M. Montcalm may have to change the news that he sends to his master in Paris."

"It is strange that Loudoun does not move," I said. "I have heard that he is ambitious, and one would think he would seize the opportunity to win glory."

"You have not seen him, then?" said Culverhouse, briskly. "Perhaps your opportunity is coming now. He is to visit the town to-night, and, as he has been spending the day on Long Island, he must return by water. He should land near here."

I proposed that we await the chance, and Culverhouse assented willingly.

"That may be the earl now," he said, fifteen minutes later, pointing to a distant spatter of light on the stream.

The light was approaching, and we guessed it to be made by a lantern in a boat. That our surmise was correct was soon indicated by the faint splashing of oars. Then some one began to sing. The words were those of a lilting love ballad, which, Culverhouse told me, was a great favourite with people of quality in London.

"I think that is the commander-in-chief's barge," said Culverhouse.

"Do you know the voice of the singer?" I asked.

Culverhouse did not reply, and when I asked the question again he still failed to answer.

The song ceased, but it was followed by applause and laughter. The barge had now come into the light. It was gaily decorated, and carried a half-dozen persons, besides the oarsmen. In the centre of the boat sat a man of middle age. He had a florid face, a high forehead, and rather small eyes. His expression seemed to me to be both haughty and petulant. He wore a brilliant uniform, but his cocked hat was set a trifle more rakishly on one side than the sober-minded would deem consistent with dignity. He was speaking in rather heated tones to a man who sat facing him.

"I tell you, Hardy," he said, "these fellows of yours are a pestiferous set to deal with. They expect too

much of the King and his officers, and when they get it they expect more. Are we to spend all our time and energy in protecting people who should protect themselves?"

"But it is for such purposes that the King has sent us here, my lord," replied the man, gravely.

I recognized the second speaker, a substantial, elderly figure, as Sir Charles Hardy, who had but recently resigned his position as royal governor of the most loyal province of New York in order that a good sailor might not be spoiled in the making a poor governor.

"It is true!" exclaimed the man, not abating the loudness or sharpness of his tone; "but we are not here to be cozened and cheated by them. They are shrewd hands at driving bargains, and think more of squeezing a profit out of my army than of contributing to the King's grandeur and glory. This is a fine coil when a nobleman must serve the ends of such hucksters and traders."

"The Earl of Loudoun, the commander-in-chief?" I whispered to Culverhouse.

He nodded.

We did not mean to be eavesdroppers, for I have ever despised such, but we could not withdraw without attracting attention to ourselves, perhaps to be followed by unpleasant inquiry.

"I think, my lord," said Sir Charles, mildly, "that you misjudge our people here. Doubtless there are cheats among them, but we have such at home in England, too, you know."

"But they are not among our foremost men there," said Loudoun, with a flushed face. "Besides, I like not the talk that has been carried on so freely about me here. It seems to me they take strange liberties with their betters in the colonies, Hardy. They compare me with Montcalm, and they say the Frenchman does not suffer by it. What do you think of that, Hardy?"

Sir Charles was silent for a few moments. I knew what his reply must be if he spoke the truth, but the governor was a diplomatic man, and presently he said, smoothly and evenly—

"You must admit, my lord, that Montcalm has skill, and has been able to make some head against us. But I doubt not that when you take the field you will make disposition of him to the great satisfaction of his Majesty and all of us."

"Ay, that I will, Hardy!" said the earl, with returning cheerfulness. "Even now I am expecting news from Webb that he has chased Montcalm back into his own savage country. What can a few Frenchmen and their savage allies accomplish against my brave boys there?"

He waved his hand in the direction of the twinkling lights, where the bulk of the army lay, and then clapped it heavily upon the shoulder of a man who sat near him.

"What can the Frenchman and his savages effect against a real army, I say, McLean?" he asked, raising his voice again.

I had not paid until then any particular notice to the man whom he called McLean. But the earl's action caused me to examine him closely. Though the blow was rather a heavy one, McLean did not yield to it a particle. His was an elderly face, darkened and seamed by years and exposure. He had a small, red eye, a high, hooked nose, and a stubby, red beard. He was Scotch. That was plain enough. His face was one of great strength. Here was a man of will and action, I thought.

"One of the majors," whispered Culverhouse.

"There are many in your army, my lord," said Major McLean, "who would like to give the Frenchman the opportunity to see what he can do."

"You make rather free, Major McLean," said the earl, showing temper. Then he added, more lightly, "But I must remember that you are one of those who have a most wicked appetite for war, and love to see the flash of the cannon—a most unchristian taste, I submit, is it not, Hardy?"

"Since there must be wars, it is well that some should have it," said Sir Charles.

"And we do not think, my lord," said the Scotchman, speaking in a firm, precise tone, "that it is a quality in the possession of which the French should excel us just now."

"Let the French rest for awhile," said Loudoun, impatiently.

"My lord, we have let them rest too long already," said the major.

Loudoun uttered something that sounded like an oath. But Major McLean was so much his senior in years and experience that he could scarcely resent openly the criticism that he knew to be so just.

"We will take these matters up in a day or two," he said. "Meanwhile we will confine ourselves to the business in hand."

The barge had reached the shore, but the oarsmen experienced some difficulty in holding it to the landing-place. The boat and its lights had attracted another spectator, a tall, lank man, whose features we could not discern in the dusk.

The lapping of the tide swung the boat back and forth, and it bumped heavily more than once against the wharf. Loudoun, seized with impatience, cried out to the tall stranger, who had come near—

"Here, you lout, lend a hand and pull the boat up!"

The stranger slouched closer to the wharf, but made no movement to help. We were now able to obtain a better view of his face, and we saw that it was that of a boy rather than a man. He was at least six feet two inches tall, and as slim as a rail. A great shock of tow hair overhung a pair of blinking blue eyes. He leered inquisitively at the barge and its passengers.

"I say, you lout," called Loudoun, angrily, "bear a hand and help us with the boat!"

"What's the matter with you, stranger?" asked the lad, speaking in a nasal drawl, and showing no signs of discomposure. "I don't see no cause to get excited. That's a tarnal fine uniform you have on, stranger. I'd

like to have it. I'll trade you these old clothes of mine for it."

The elongated lad threw back his head and laughed an uproarious, idiotic laugh.

"This is a type of your huckstering, clumsy provincial, Hardy!" said Loudoun. "It's just as I said. What can we do with fellows like this?"

"Help us with the boat," said Sir Charles to the lad. "This is the commander-in-chief, and you may have the opportunity to-morrow to tell your companions that you did a service for the Earl of Loudoun himself."

"And if you don't help us," added Loudoun, impatiently, "I may make it somewhat uncomfortable for you!"

The boy leaned his great length against a post, pulled at his tow locks, and said, with a grin—

"I ain't scared, and I ain't goin' to help neither. I ain't no soldier to be ordered around. Let him help himself."

"Dash the fellow for his impertinence!" exclaimed Loudoun. "I'll give him a taste of discipline in advance myself!"

He attempted to leap from the boat to the wharf, but miscalculated, and fell with a great splash into the sea. Two stout oarsmen seized him and dragged him spluttering back into the boat.

The boy, whom I now took to be feeble of mind, bent over in a semicircle, put his hands upon his knees, and laughed in huge glee.

"Oh, what a splash you made!" he exclaimed between chuckles. "An' that tarnation fine uniform all wet through and through!"

"I'll have you flogged half to death!" exclaimed the earl, furiously, coughing the dirty salt water out of his throat. Probably he would have carried out his threat; but when the men succeeded in tying the boat to the wharf and he stepped ashore, the lad was gone in the darkness, slipping away as silently as an Indian.

"The earl will have to get a new uniform for the ball," said Culverhouse.

"What ball?" I asked.

"Why, the ball at the Waltons'," replied Culverhouse. "Have you forgotten?"

I had forgotten for the moment. But the events of the day were sufficient excuse for my condition of mind. I had an invitation to the ball, which was to be an exceeding great affair, graced by the presence of all the dignitaries, both military and civil, and I determined to attend.

An hour later Culverhouse and I approached the brilliantly illuminated residence, in Queen Street, of my prosperous fellow-townsman, Mr. William Walton, who, you will recall, was the son of Captain William Walton, a famous shipbuilder, and who made a great fortune out of some fine contracts with the Spanish at St. Augustine. I was myself a distant relative of his wife Cornelia, through the Beekmans, she being the daughter of Dr. William Beekman, whose wife, Catharine de la Noy, was my mother's first cousin.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FASHION OF NEW YORK.

CULVERHOUSE and I stood for awhile in the street admiring this noble mansion, which is yet pointed out to all who visit in New York. I do not believe the colonies could boast another of such stately proportions, with its three imposing stories, its noble portico, with fluted columns and other embellishments of the architectural art. The three long rows of windows were flashing with lights. The carriages of our aristocracy were arriving already. The link boys were in the streets with their flaming torches, shouting to each other and conveying the commands of their masters. A great display they made, too, for we had a very rich, proud, and powerful aristocracy. In truth, it was charged against us in the New York colony then, that, while we pretended to freedom and democratic equality, we had transplanted the feudal system of Europe, and cherished it full as warmly as it was cherished in its ancient seats. But it is not for me to discuss the question here.

Presently a noble white chariot, drawn by four great black horses, drove up with a mighty clatter of hoofs and

rattle of wheels. Mr. James de Lancey, the Lieutenant-Governor of our colony, a very great man, and his family alighted from it and entered the house. Another chariot, containing Mr. Oliver de Lancey, his brother, and his family, followed speedily. Then came their great rivals, the Livingstons—our city being divided into two camps, the de Lancey camp and the Livingston camp—and after them our treasurer, Abraham de Peyster, who, I verily believe, made the noblest and most sumptuous show of them all. His coach was trimmed in silver, with the family arms very conspicuous upon it, and was drawn by four spirited and beautifully matched greys. There were four servants in attendance, each wearing a blue coat lined with yellow, with yellow cuffs and yellow small clothes. The buttons were of plain velvet, but the buttonholes were beautifully worked in yellow.

I would have liked to ask Culverhouse if he had seen any more sumptuous equipage in London, but I thought it better taste not to do so.

Then came the Philipses, and the Van Courtlandts, and the Beekmans, and the Wattses, and the Coldens, and the Alexanders, and the Roosevelts, and the Lispenards, and the Nicollses, and so many others that I cannot tell of them all, merely adding again for the benefit of strangers that we had an aristocracy which, time and place considered, was quite the equal of any in the world.

"Look, look!" exclaimed Culverhouse, suddenly. "See, 'tis the Queen of France!"

The light-blue chariot of Mr. Archibald Kennedy, drawn by four matched sorrels, had just stopped before the door. Mr. Kennedy had sprung out, and with bared head was assisting Mlle. de St. Maur to alight. I understood at once what Culverhouse meant when he exclaimed, "The Queen of France!"

Mlle. Louise was arrayed in her finest, which was very fine indeed, and for the moment my eyes were dazzled by the splendour of her toilet, and the striking contrast of her deep-blue eyes and shining black hair. She bore herself, too, with a dignity equal to her beauty, and this dignity, verging upon haughtiness, was quite natural in one among a strange and hostile people.

Behind her came the seigneur, glittering in the lace and gold of a colonel of France, with his cocked and plumed hat on his head, and splendid medals and orders upon his breast. With his brown, leathery, and Indian-like face, he looked very strange, and yet very imposing, in such brilliant garb. He was as stiff as a ramrod, and his failure to express any emotion whatsoever, increased the resemblance of his face to that of the red warrior.

"Why, how did they come here?" I asked Culverhouse, in some surprise.

"Why shouldn't they come?" replied he. "The seigneur is here upon official and important business. It is natural that he should be the guest of Mr. Kennedy, with whom he has had commercial dealings before the war, and it was the courtesy of one nation to another to invite them to this ball."

A restive horse attached to another carriage pressed very close to mademoiselle. I was glad of the opportunity, and I sprang forward, pulling the horse back with one hand, and sweeping my hat off with the other, while I made a very low bow.

Mlle. de St. Maur recognized me upon the instant, much to my joy.

"I have to thank you twice to-day, Lieutenant Charteris," she said, with a very bright smile.

Then the Kennedy party went into the house, and Culverhouse and I soon followed.

The ball was given for the honour and entertainment of our commander-in-chief, and all the officers and persons of distinction in the town were invited. Our commercial people in New York had accumulated much store of wealth, and they were not reluctant to give evidence of it. In truth, they would be anxious, the feminine portion of them in particular, to make a goodly show before our cousins from England.

When I entered the ballroom I saw that I would have no cause to feel shame for our Americans. They wore costumes brilliant in colour and of the latest mode, many of them having been brought over from London, at great cost, especially for such grand routs as this.

Standing stiffly erect just under one of the wax candles was Mr. Arthur, looking very prim and precise. His eyes met mine, but he took no notice of me beyond a slight nod. I replied with a nod equally indifferent. I looked about me for Marion, and did not see her; but

my attention was attracted at that moment by a great bustle at the door. Important personages were entering, and the military band, loaned by the earl himself, and stationed in the next room, began to play a most inspiriting tune.

It was the earl, accompanied by Sir Charles Hardy and a numerous staff, who was entering. He was much more composed and dignified than when I had seen him before, and conducted himself with graciousness and [illegible] The occasion and the surroundings were congenial. [illegible] one end of the room was a dais, bearing a fanciful resemblance to a throne. To this the earl was conducted, and, sitting there, he received the addresses and the homage of those who sought his acquaintance or favour. Among the latter, I am bound to confess, were some of our own people. Millwood, the fat contractor, who had made such great sums by furnishing short supplies at long prices to the army, was there, bowing and smirking as if the hinges of his knees had been freshly oiled, and he were the most honest man in the room.

" It is your turn, Charteris," said Culverhouse, thrusting a very sharp elbow into my side, " to make apologies for your countryman. I think of the two I would prefer the earl."

I had small relish for his gibe, and, not knowing how to retort, I devoted myself to the more grateful task of joining the ladies.

Other rooms connecting with the ballroom had been prepared for the guests, and they were at liberty to

wander through them as they chose. There was much to see. The grand staircase, with its hand-rails and banisters of mahogany, was a noble specimen of art. In the great dining-room was the finest display of silver plate in all the colonies, and I heard long after, when the King wanted to tax the colonies and they pleaded poverty, that some of the English officers who had been present cited this very display of plate, and said few noblemen in England were rich enough to show its equal.

In the most secluded of the rooms I saw Marion, talking to Spencer. She arose at once, and introduced me to Captain Gerald Spencer, who had arrived but a short while ago from Europe to join the army. We bowed as if we had never met before. In truth, ours had been but a brief and unpleasant coffee-house acquaintance.

"Captain Spencer brings some letters from very good friends of my father in England, and, as Lieutenant Charteris is my father's particular friend also, it is well that you should meet and know each other," she said.

Spencer began to talk about the latest fripperies in London, in which Marion seemed to be much interested. I was taken at a great disadvantage. I had no natural turn for such subjects, and, besides, I had never been in London in my life. I endeavoured to bring the talk back to matters nearer home, and even mentioned the war, but Marion struck me on the arm with her fan, and said in a slightly vexed tone—

"Do not mention the war to-night, Lieutenant Charteris. Why do we come to the ball but to escape from the talk about this fighting?"

"The lady is right, Lieutenant Charteris," said Spencer; "we will restrain our warlike inclinations until we meet the French."

I had blundered, and, making my apologies, I left them. So I soon found myself again in the company of Culverhouse, and shortly afterward saw Mr. Arthur talking with an appearance of great friendliness and favour to Spencer.

"Tell me something about him," I said to Culverhouse, inclining my head in the direction of Spencer. I felt that I had a certain guardianship over Marion, inasmuch as we had been playmates and were akin.

"There is not enough to make a long tale," he said. "I've had some slight acquaintance with him in England, and, so far as I know, he's a decent sort of chap, though what you Americans call stiff. He is of a very old and high family in England."

"Indeed! From what royal mistress is he descended?"

"You are jealous. Spencer is to be a baronet when his old unmarried uncle dies, but the estates are not large. Mr. Arthur fancies him, and perhaps the maiden too."

The band was now playing music for the dance. Some new dances had been brought up lately from the Virginia province that had been received with great favour in New York. I thought, at first, I would

ask Marion to be my partner for one of them, as Spencer's manner had incensed me a bit, but I concluded that I would ask somebody else. The next moment I saw her dancing with the earl himself.

In truth, Marion was not much in my mind just then, and I began to look for the one who was. Presently I saw her black hair, in which was thrust a lily of France, shining between the brown and yellow heads of our own fair New York girls. I was just in time, for they had begun a most unfair attack upon her, saying that neither Quebec nor Montreal could present such an array of fine men and beautiful women as that now present.

"Mlle. de St. Maur will not yield to our claims, Lieutenant Charteris," said Miss Mary Colden to me as I approached.

"Nor should she," said I, with a gallantry intended for Mlle. Louise's ear. "The lily of France is always triumphant."

Then I carried her off to the dance, she smiling her thanks to me, and I hugely delighted with myself. More than once in the dance I met Marion's eyes, and I saw a peculiar smile there which made me flush a little. I thought she might be piqued a bit, for a woman likes to have many lovers on her string.

The earl was in high good humour, all the ill temper I had seen in him when he was in the barge having departed. His partner's beauty and grace could not fail to make an impression upon him, and his manner was of the courtliest. No doubt the war and its

responsibilities had disappeared entirely from his mind. A little later, when I was compelled to yield mademoiselle to another colonial officer and I was standing alone, some one tapped me on the arm; I looked around and beheld the glum face of Martin Groot.

Martin had arrayed himself in something like festive style in deference to the occasion, but his countenance was as morose and his temper as irascible as ever.

"I wonder if Montcalm is engaged in the same business just now?" he said, looking sourly at the earl.

His remark seemed apt, and I suggested that Montcalm was probably dancing to another sort of music, and that we would have to pay for his fiddler.

"And he will continue to present his bills to us for payment," said Groot, "so long as the English send over gallants like that earl there to command us. Pah! Are we children to stand this?"

I suggested that we were not altogether without blame ourselves, and I made instance of Millwood, the contractor, and others, all of whom were present that evening, basking in the sunshine of our provincial court.

"It is true," said the glowering Martin. "What a pity Montcalm could not catch every one of them, and send them off to France!—that is, the dishonest ones; for I am in the army supply business myself, and they hurt my trade."

Then he passed on to pour his complaints into the ears of others who he knew would not repeat his censorious remarks.

As I had no partner for the next dance, I sought the seigneur, and exerted myself that I might be agreeable to him. I found him to be a man of most courtly breeding. Nothing in his manner indicated his knowledge that he was upon the enemy's ground, and for a quarter of an hour he talked to me of the Old World, and told me incidents of the court of France. But ours was a shifting crowd. Every one in his turn gave way to some one else, and presently I found myself again with Culverhouse. He advised me to go into one of the side rooms and partake of a famous brew prepared by our host, who was renowned throughout the colony for his splendid entertainments. The advice seemed palatable, and we wandered off in search of the boasted decoction.

We found a lively group around the punch-bowl. They were mostly young officers, British and American both. Some of them we knew, and they greeted us with much applause. I drank a glass to the toast of our military success, and it put much heart into me.

"Here comes a new officer!" exclaimed our Scotch friend, young Graham, who had been no enemy to the punch. "But I wonder what army he belongs to. By my faith, he must be a general at the very least!" He pointed to the door, and there was a great outburst of laughter from the group. But Culverhouse pinched my arm in his surprise, which, however, did not exceed mine.

The boy who had laughed at the earl's mishap, looking longer and lanker than ever in the bright light,

stalked solemnly into the room. He was not disturbed one whit by the derisive laughter that saluted him. He looked about him, but there was no trace of expression on his face. We might have been a thousand miles away, so far as his eye denoted anything.

"Well, general!" cried Graham; "is there anything we can do for you? Have you any commands for us, or do you wish to lead us immediately against the French?"

The boy looked at Graham, and then his eyes passed on to the others.

"Come, come!" cried Graham, "we all know the respect that is due to your Highness, but you know our martial character also, and we beseech you to break our suspense and tell us if the danger be pressing."

"I'm looking for the Earl of Loudoun," said the boy, "an' you ain't him."

"Nothing less than the earl himself will content the general!" exclaimed Graham, flushing a little when the officers laughed at the boy's remark. "That's right, general; don't forfeit your dignity by discussing deep affairs with mere captains and lieutenants. But I fear much that the earl will not be accessible just now, even to so great a personage as your Highness. His occupation at this moment is too pleasurable for us to interrupt it."

"I want to see the Earl of Loudoun," repeated the boy, in the same expressionless tone.

"I'm afraid your Highness will have to wait or

ask one of us to take your message," said Graham. "Would you condescend to divulge its import to one of us?"

"I must tell it to the Earl of Loudoun himself," said the boy. "That's who I was to give it to, an' I won't give it to nobody else."

"A determined character, I see," said Graham. "Well, determination is the quality such important personages as your Highness need most. Doubtless your Highness is worried by great responsibilities, and a little of this noble brew will relieve you of your cares. Drink a toast with us, general."

"I don't care if I do," said the boy, turning his gaze upon the great punch-bowl. "That looks pretty good for a dry throat."

"A most miraculous cure for all such," said Graham. "Brother officers and gentlemen, join us in a toast to our new and distinguished comrade!"

The glasses were filled, and then in a twinkling each was emptied. The boy drained his at a draught. Then he handed it back to Graham, and said in his unchanging drawl—

"That was pretty good, an' no mistake. Fill it up ag'in, stranger."

Graham obeyed willingly. The boy drank the glassful again, and winked not an eye. Nor did the slightest flush come into his face.

"You are worthy to be an officer indeed," said Graham, tendering him a third glassful. I saw that Graham's plan was to get him into a state of intoxication,

in order that this country lad might make mirth for some idle officers. I felt like interfering, but there was such a chorus of approval around Graham that I hung back.

"Take another," said Graham.

"I don't care," said the boy, "if you fellows will drink with me. It's not manners to drink by yourself."

The officers drank with him, but when he had drained a fourth glass too, they could not bear him company any longer. Their eyes were sparkling and their faces flushed, but his countenance was unchanged. When he put down his glass the last time, he looked stolidly around and again repeated—

"I want to see the Earl of Loudoun."

"You can't," said Graham.

"I've got to see him," said the boy. "I've got to see the earl himself, an' I'm not goin' away till I've seen him."

He spoke in such a positive manner that his words made some impression.

"He may really have a message of importance," said a major, who was the eldest and staidest of the party. "I think I shall tell the earl of him."

He left the room to find the earl, and Culverhouse and I, led by curiosity, followed to see to what end the matter would come.

We found the earl in the same high humour. One of the dances had just come to a conclusion, and he was sitting on his makeshift throne surrounded by a

worshipful party, in which were Mr. Arthur and Millwood, the sleek contractor. The major approached him, and saluted in a military manner.

"What is it, Calthorpe?" asked the earl, good-humouredly. "Why do you pull a long face on a night of gaiety like this?"

"I have a message, your lordship," said the major, bowing deeply, "or rather there is some one without who insists that he has a message for you of such importance that he will deliver it to you only."

"Business?" said the earl, frowning. "I do not care to turn my mind to such discussions to-night. It would not be gallant or courteous to our host. Let these matters wait until to-morrow."

"But the messenger is marked by such eccentricities of person, and seemed so earnest of manner, that I felt it my duty to come to you and tell you of him," said Major Calthorpe.

"Of a queer cast, is he?" said the earl, showing some curiosity. "Tell me of this person whose affairs are of such importance that the world must cease to roll until he describes them."

The major gave an account of the boy and his actions. This piqued the earl's curiosity, and he gave order that the messenger be brought before him. The major returned in a moment with the lad, followed by a crowd of officers.

The earl fell to laughing as soon as he saw the messenger, whom he did not recognize, for he had seen him but faintly at the waterside.

"You are right, major," he said; "he is a person of some eccentricities of manner and appearance. I am glad that you brought him. We may have something amusing here.—What is your name, my lad?"

"Zebedee Crane," replied the boy, not seeming to be in the least dazzled by the lights and the people in their splendid apparel.

"The last name befits you if the first does not," said the earl, still laughing. "Where do you live?"

"Up the Mohawk Valley, when I'm to home," replied the boy.

"Evidently you are not 'to home' now," said the earl, and all the sycophants laughed. "You are not familiar with such sights as this, are you?"

The earl had taken wine in the course of the evening, and was bent upon sport. But Zebedee Crane's face remained stolid. He replied merely that it was all mighty fine.

"Wouldn't you like to be an officer like these gentlemen here," asked the earl, "and dance with us to-night?"

"I didn't come here for that," said the boy. "I came to see the Earl of Loudoun."

"Well, what is this matter which is of such weight that you can tell it to me alone?" said the earl, in some vexation at the unconscious rebuke of his childishness.

"Are you the Earl of Loudoun?" asked the boy, cautiously.

"I am," said the earl. "I think that some of my friends here can vouch for my identity."

"In good truth we can," said Mr. Arthur, pompously. —"Boy, this is the Earl of Loudoun, commander-in-chief of the royal forces in America."

"Then," said Zebedee, "if you are the Earl of Loudoun, I've brought news from General Webb for you."

The earl uttered an exclamation, and there was a murmur of voices and moving of feet in the crowd which had gathered around to see the sport with the boy. All of them had been infected by Loudoun's sanguine predictions of news from Webb that he had avenged William Henry and chased Montcalm back into Canada.

"Then you may be a more welcome messenger than I thought," said the earl. "What fine victory has Webb gained for us? What noble revenge has he taken for the disaster at William Henry?"

"I don't know anythin' about victories and revenges," said Zeb, "but they say Webb ain't overfond of fightin'. Anyhow, he's quit, nearly all his army has gone home, an' Montcalm and his Indians are marchin' on Albany they say, and maybe they'll be here in New York, too, pretty soon."

"What!" exclaimed Loudoun, pallor replacing the flush on his cheek. "What do you say? It's a lie!"

"'Tain't no lie either," said Zebedee, calmly. "Leastways when I left I saw the troops goin' home, whole companies an' regiments of 'em, an' I saw the settlers in waggons, on horses, and walkin', goin' to Albany as

fast as they could to save their scalps from Montcalm's men."

The band had begun to play again, and some of the partners were taking their places for the dance.

"Stop that noise!" said the earl, angrily, and in a moment we heard only the heavy breathing of people dreading to hear evil news.

"I don't believe this," began the earl, in a high voice; "it is all a lie, the concoction of a weak-minded boy. I'll have you whipped in the stocks, sir, for bringing such falsehoods here!"

"'Tain't worth while," said Zebedee, undisturbed. "I'm the messenger of General Webb himself. Here's his letter for you, tellin' all that's been done, I guess."

He thrust his hand into his coat and drew out a piece of paper. The earl read it, and his chin dropped. There was no need then for him to read it to us.

As we stood there in the ballroom, Martin Groot thrust his grim face in between Culverhouse and me, and said—

"Montcalm knows how to make fine music, too, but his tunes are not like ours."

There was a great hum in the ballroom at this disastrous news, following so closely upon the capture of William Henry and the massacre of our people there. The thing was on everybody's tongue, and even in the presence of the earl himself many bitter words were said about his slothfulness and incompetency, which had left all our border open to the inroads of the

French and the scalping knives of their savage allies. And there was terror, too, among the women, who expected to hear next that Albany had fallen, and Montcalm, with a great army, was in full march on New York.

"The English will redeem themselves," I heard Governor de Lancey say to a group of men in the corner of the room.

"Perhaps," replied William Livingston, curtly, "but how will that bring back to life the scores of Americans who are perishing daily under the Indian tomahawk?"

These two men were ever on opposite sides, and each strove, like a feudal baron, to be the ruler of New York. Most all have heard the old story how they met one day in the street, and Governor de Lancey said to Mr. Livingston—

"Will, you would be the cleverest fellow if you were only one of us."

"I will try to be a clever fellow and not be one of you," replied Mr. Livingston.

Which, I take it, caused no increase of good feeling between them. At any rate, on this evening they stood staring in icy fashion at each other, as they must have stared then. I have only to shut my eyes now and see them as they appeared that night—Mr. Livingston, but little more than thirty, tall, very thin, and graceful, with a keen knife-blade face; Governor de Lancey, older, broader, heavier, and perhaps more imposing; both in powdered wigs, velvet coats, great embroidered ruffles, short breeches, silk stockings of the finest quality,

and shoes with great gold buckles; very presentable both of them.

Perhaps they thought it undignified to wage a controversy there and then, and they walked away in opposite directions.

CHAPTER V.

ENTER THE MAJOR.

THERE could be no gaiety at the ball after the ghastly news that Zebedee Crane had brought. The earl seemed quite overpowered by it, when he had so fondly been expecting news from Webb that he had redeemed the disgraceful disaster of William Henry and restored the fortunes of the campaign. As I gazed at his blanched face, where he still sat on his throne, sucking his dry lips, I felt no sorrow for him. He had idled and frolicked his hour away, and had taken no care to avoid the blow which had been struck so hard. All my pity was reserved for our bleeding frontier.

There was a great turmoil in the ballroom for a little while. Then they began to put out the lights. The band had ceased to play already. In the universal agitation Zebedee Crane had disappeared, but the fatal letter from Webb was still there, a witness that he had told the truth.

I thought at once of the de St. Maurs. Such sudden and terrible news would bring them many frowns, for these two were French. I found the seigneur first. He stood by the wall, his face calm and immovable, though

of course he had seen all that passed. But he did not show any exultation, and when I spoke of the news he merely said—

"It is the fortune of war; it may be our turn next to fall back."

But I knew that in his heart he did not think so; that he thought the French would always advance.

I suggested as delicately as I could that it would be best for him and Mlle. de St. Maur to leave at once, and I offered to find mademoiselle. He assented, and thanked me. It was well that I sought Mlle. de St. Maur, for I found that all our New York girls were withdrawing from her presence and looking most coldly upon her.

Mr. Kennedy, with the same object in view, had already ordered his coach. We quietly helped the de St. Maurs into it, and they drove away unnoticed in the confusion. Then I went back into the house to see how it all would end.

The earl had roused himself from his stupor, and with his hand on his sword-hilt, and a show of bravado on his face, was leaving the house surrounded by his staff. There was a great clack of voices around him, which he made no attempt to check. Culverhouse and I followed, and then all of us went out into the street. The news, spreading with a speed for which I cannot account, was known already in the town, and there was a crowd gathered outside. When the earl stepped into the clear, cool moonlight, two or three persons in the crowd hissed. It was not possible to tell from whom

the hisses proceeded, but all knew for whom they were intended. But the earl took no apparent note of them, save to raise his head a little more haughtily. Then he strode down the street, the torchbearers going in front, and the swords of his staff clanking at his heels. The crowd followed.

"It might be worth while to follow and see what may happen," said Culverhouse. "If I mistake not, affairs have a threatening look."

He was right, for more hisses came from the pursuing crowd, and Culverhouse and I strolled along, keeping aloof from either party, but holding both in clear view.

It was evident that the earl intended to return at once to his quarters. As he advanced the crowd pressed closer upon the heels of his staff, and some one threw a stone. It is true it flew high over the heads of the earl's party, as the man who threw it probably intended that it should, but it struck a board wall with a resounding thwack. The earl stopped, and turned around.

"Gentlemen," he said in a high voice to his officers, "clear away this rabble!"

The officers drew their swords, and, laying about them with the flats of the blades, soon put the crowd to flight. In truth, the people made no resistance, for they had been content with expressing their displeasure in such a manifest way. The earl and his staff passed on without further disturbance. Then we discovered that we were not the only officers who had followed to

see what might happen. A dozen or more stood about in the moonlight discussing the affairs of the evening. Among them I noticed Spencer and Graham, who were together. They were only a few yards from us, and Spencer's glance fell upon us.

"Bad news to-night, eh, Lieutenant Charteris?" he said jauntily; "but all this will be changed when the regular troops reach the scene of action."

"The regular troops seem to have been of very little avail so far," I said.

"I do not understand. I think it is our colonial levies that have been experiencing these disasters," said Spencer.

He knew better, for I had told him so at the coffee-house. He raised his eyebrows as he spoke, and there was something rasping in his tone.

"What could you expect from provincials?" put in Graham, who had taken wine enough to upset his balance. "When the trained troops from the old country reach the frontier, they will scatter the French and their red friends as the wind scatters the dry leaves."

"It was not so at Fort Duquesne," I remarked.

Spencer flushed at the taunt, given the second time.

"We were surprised there," he said.

"Surprise seems to be your customary condition," I said. "You seem to forget, gentlemen, that it is your people and not ours who have been directing the affairs on the border, and that your own leaders have suffered these disasters."

I think that Spencer would have let the matter pass, as he knew he had begun the trouble, had it not been for that drunken Graham.

"He insults us, and he insults the whole army," said the Scotchman. "Spencer, I would not endure his words."

"It seems to me," said Spencer to me, "that you assume rather a high tone. Perhaps your criticisms might be weightier if your experience were greater."

"It does not take any experience at all," I rejoined, with a laugh, "to discern the faults of the leaders whom Britain has sent us. Their mistakes are so large that even the blind can see them."

"You speak very plainly, sir," said Spencer, angrily, as he put his hand on the hilt of his sword. "Men who use such words as yours should be prepared to prove them with deeds."

"Oh, you can't fight him!" said Graham, with a drunken leer. "He's not of your rank. You mustn't forget that any officer who holds a commission from the King, even if he be only a lieutenant, outranks any officer who holds a commission from a provincial government, even if he be a general."

"For shame!" said Culverhouse, speaking for the first time. "That contention has never been proved, and it can not be raised here."

"Without yielding the point, I waive it," said Spencer. "I consider it my bounden duty to resent the gentlemen's offensive remarks, and to demand the satisfaction which I trust he is ready to accord me."

"I am ready at any time and place," I replied.

"Gentlemen," said Culverhouse, speaking with more warmth than he usually showed, "it seems to me that you are turning a very slight punctilio into a very serious matter. Surely this can be settled without a resort to violence. It were better for us to save the edge of our swords for the French."

"And it were better for a King's officer to consort with his own people," said the drunken Graham, "instead of making cause with these colonials, who expect us to fight for them and to take ingratitude as our sole reward."

"If I wished advice as to the choice of my friends, I would go to a better quarter," said Culverhouse, calmly.

But he made no further attempt to check the progress of our quarrel.

"There is a very secluded and pleasant spot some distance back of the city," said Graham, who seemed much bent upon having us fight. "I noticed it two days ago, and it struck me then as an exceedingly favourable place for a passage at arms between gentlemen."

"I am at the service of Lieutenant Charteris," said Spencer, politely. "As I consider myself the challenger, it is for him or his second to name the weapons and suggest a place."

I turned to Culverhouse. He divined the question that was on my lips, and, before I could coin it into words, said—

"It will afford me pleasure to be your second in this affair, Charteris. I think I know the place of which Lieutenant Graham speaks, and it will serve our purpose well enough."

Then he and Graham drew aside, and talked for a little while. Presently he returned to the spot where Spencer and I were standing, stiff and silent, within a few feet of each other.

"You are to fight with small swords," he said, "and you will meet to-morrow evening in the moonlight at the spot Lieutenant Graham has mentioned."

Both Spencer and I said we were satisfied with the choice of weapons. There was a little more discussion as to the exact time of the meeting and other arrangements, and then we parted, Spencer and Graham going to the camp and Culverhouse and I remaining in the city.

Culverhouse left me at my quarters with a brief good-night and a remark that he would come around to see me in the morning. When he had gone I sat down at the window and looked out upon the town. I was still hot and angry. Spencer's superciliousness and the wine-fed sneers of Graham had been an exceeding annoyance to me. The affectation of superiority shown by so many of the officers from the old country was very galling to us who were colonial born, and we were quick to resent it. In this and kindred things lay the seeds of the mortal quarrel which divided us for ever twenty years later, and not a few among us were beginning to see it. My temples throbbed beneath the

rush of wrathful blood. Then I felt sorry that the duel had been postponed twenty-four hours. Why could we not have fought the matter out at once?

But as I continued to look out upon the peaceful town the heat in my blood began to subside. There is something very soothing in a cool night breeze. I have noticed that men are much more warlike by sunlight than by moonlight.

When I had at last indulged in a quarter of an hour of serious reflection, my feelings made a complete change. Then I saw very clearly that I did not want to kill Spencer, nor did I want him to kill me. I perceived also how trivial had been our cause of quarrel. Was a sneer or two sufficient excuse for the taking of life? Out of my sober mind I concluded that it was not. It was the duty of both Spencer and myself to risk our lives for the country, but the way to do it was by fighting the common enemy, and not by slashing at each other with our swords.

These thoughts convinced me that we had no right to fight each other when our Government had equipped and maintained us for its own service.

But I did not see any way to escape with honour from the quarrel. The challenge had been given, and I had accepted it. I must fight Spencer. My blood was not so warm now. On the contrary, it was a chill current in my veins. I was not afraid; that is, I had the will to face death, though I have the frankness to say that I did not want to die. But it is almost superfluous to say one does not want to die when he is only

two and twenty, and is dreaming of wearing a general's uniform some day.

I had attained some proficiency with the sword, a rather unusual thing in the colonies, for, as the rifle and the axe were the weapons with which our people had won the country, they had small time or taste left for the sword. Nevertheless, I had practised with the weapon, and I believed that in the coming encounter I would uphold the credit of our side of the Atlantic, in so far as credit was to be obtained from such an affair.

I had determined to go to sleep early, knowing that there was nothing for the nerves like a good night's rest, and I would need a steady heart and hand on the morrow. But sleep would not come merely for the calling of it. I put out the candle and lay down upon my bed, only to stare up at the darkness with unwinking eyes. New troubles came to me then. Suppose I killed Spencer! What would my own people think of me? The duel was not so fashionable among us—at least, in the Northern colonies—as it was in Britain. Our steady people frowned very much upon it as one of the evils of the Old World that need not be transplanted to the New.

I heard the watchman call "Three o'clock, and all is well!" and I answered him under my breath, but with anger, that all was not well. Soon afterward I fell into some kind of a distempered sleep, from which I awoke unrested. I could not hope for further sleep, so I arose and went to the window. Although an officer, I had

not yet been required for any regular service, and, having no quarters allotted to me at the camp, I had obtained a room for myself in the city. It was a narrow little place, but the window looked over the bay, and as I gazed out with hot eyes I saw a pale and slender line of light shoot up from the black and grey mass of the sea. It quivered on the water like a streak of melting silver, and I thought for a moment it was the reflection of a falling star, and would fade. But new lines rose, apparently from the depths of the ocean, and streaked its surface with silver. Under the rim of the eastern horizon a grey light was showing, and the silver arrows which fell across the water rapidly turned to gold, and the grey light itself gave way before the edge of a burning disk which rose slowly and proudly from the sea.

The eastern skies were spangled with gold as the sun, coming up from his night's sleep in the ocean's bed, shot his flaming darts in millions. The surface of the water became luminous. The sails of the ships in the bay showed white in the clear morning air. A polished bayonet on the wooded shores of Long Island, struck by a ray of light, threw off a flash and a gleam. Further away the hills of Staten Island rose up in masses of green. The huge red globe of the sun now swung clear of the sea and crept imperceptibly up toward the zenith. The heavy note of a gun in the camp boomed over the hitherto silent waters, and the day had come to life again.

In a few minutes I heard voices in the street below

me. The town was awake, and its busy life had begun. A sailor in a foreign garb sang a song in a foreign tongue. I knew not the words, but it was a joyful song. I looked out at the sailor. He was walking along in the queer, rolling fashion of the men of the sea. But he was a happy fellow, and seemed to be all content with himself and his lot. How beautiful the world looked, flooded with the pure radiance of the morning! How hard to give it all up, when one was only two and twenty!

But I determined to cast aside such enervating thoughts, and when I had eaten some breakfast I felt in better mood for the sharp business that was to come. Culverhouse came presently.

"Everything is ready for our affair," he said. "I think it will be a fine moonlight night. Plenty of light for the swords, and the place is far enough from the camp to prevent any interference. There will be only five present—you and Spencer, Graham and myself, and an army surgeon who has frequently acted at such affairs."

Of a certainty they had been expeditious enough about it all. Culverhouse went away in a few minutes, saying he would meet me just outside the camp at six o'clock in the evening, and we would go then to the dueling ground.

My presence would be required at the camp for awhile that day, and accordingly I buckled on my sword and walked towards the field beyond King Street, in which so many of the soldiers were encamped.

As I walked along, somewhat absorbed, a heavy hand fell upon my shoulder, and a cheerful voice, speaking very good English, but giving a very strong Scotch twang to it, bade me good morning, adding thereto the remark that it was a very fine day for both men and beasts.

I looked around in some surprise, and recognized the stern-faced Scotch major whom I had seen in the boat with the earl the previous night, and later at the ball. He was a tall man, bent just a trifle about the shoulders. His appearance was sufficient to tell any observer that this was a soldier of long and varied experience.

"I am familiar, young man," he said, "but you will charge it to my years. They are enough to stand it. I saw you at the ball last night, and you seemed to be less rattle-brained than most of the others of your age who were there. Your grave appearance this morning when I overtook you furthered that belief. Judging from your uniform, you are of the Royal Americans—is it not so?"

I replied in the affirmative. Then he asked me if I had seen any service. I said that I had seen none as yet, but hoped that the time would soon come.

"The time when we should be seeing service is at hand," he said, "and of a certainty, after the news we received last night, action cannot be postponed much longer."

The old major's eyes snapped as he spoke. It was quite evident that he was no sluggard at his trade.

"I believe," I said respectfully, "that I am speaking to one who has seen much of the wars."

"I am Major McLean, of the Black Watch, the Highlanders, you know," he said, "and I have served in the King's army since I began life in it as a drummer-boy of twelve. That takes us far back, almost to the last century. I have served in many wars, and in many parts of the world. I can say that, lad, without boasting or without adding a hair's breadth to God's truth."

I saw that he had a touch of garrulity, but it did not decrease my respect for him. It was the privilege of age and great labours. Moreover, he aroused my curiosity, for I, a soldier who had heard the cannon nowhere, wished to listen to the soldier who had heard them everywhere.

"You began as a drummer-boy?" I said insinuatingly.

"Yes," he said, the flash coming again into his eyes, "and I followed Marlborough. It was at Blenheim that I first saw the cannon feed on human flesh. Was there ever such another victory? Then I was at Ramillies and Oudenarde and at Malplaquet. God, but I still see the field of Malplaquet sometimes at night, and I wonder if the grass has ever grown again on that piece of ground where so many good Englishmen and good Frenchmen slew each other in a dispute over a trumpery Spanish crown that mattered little to either. They may tell you, lad, that the French are fops and dandies, and cannot fight, but do not believe it. If you want to know about the French, ask those who meet them on the battle-field, not those who stay snugly at their own hearthstones."

"The colonies know too well the valour of the French," I replied. "We are not prone to underrate them, for we must consider what has happened. But you served in many other campaigns?"

I was as eager as a child to hear more.

"It was the French most of the time," he continued. "I heard a sergeant say once that the French and English were created merely that they might fight each other, and in truth it looks sometimes as if it were so. After the peace, it being a dull season, and having an adventurous spirit within me, I went to India and took a turn with John Company, but there was little in that save the prospect of dying of the plague in a ditch, and I came back to my own island. After awhile it was the French again. There was Dettingen and then Fontenoy. That was an evil place, was Fontenoy. The French got the better of us there, but it was the Irish who did it for them. A plague on their disloyal souls! But how they fight! I remember their vengeful faces when they crashed through our line at Fontenoy. I have never been able to understand, lad, why the bravest of races should remain in a subject condition, unless it be that they fight everybody's battles but their own."

I found that he was going to the camp also, and so we continued our walk together. On the way he continued his narrative.

"Before this war began I went back into the Highlands," he said, "intending to live a quiet and religious life as became my age. But I found that life in the

Highlands was more dangerous than life in the low countries when we were fighting the French there. I had been away so long, and had been so much absorbed in other things, that I had forgotten that the favourite diversion of my countrymen was to fight each other. I belonged to a clan, and it was my duty to kill members of another clan whenever and wherever I could. But the Government stepped in at the right time and shipped the fighting force of both clans to this country, in order that we might expend our valour upon the French to the great gain and glory of his Majesty, wherein I think that the Government showed much greater wisdom than is its wont."

In the short walk Major McLean asked me many questions about the French and the Indians, and I answered him as well as I could. Though he did not say it in so many words, I gathered that he, like all the other officers from over seas, thought that we would have little trouble with our enemies when we really and seriously took the field. There was also a certain patronizing air when he spoke of the colonial portion of the army which reached the quick. At first I was disposed to resent this trait in him, but, upon reflection, I saw that it was but natural, and that time and experience would probably undeceive him in both particulars. Nevertheless, I realized to the full how unfortunate it was that the officers from the mother country should assume such an attitude, whether or not they intended offence by it.

When we reached the camp Major McLean left me,

as it was his purpose to call immediately upon the earl, who wished to consult him about the campaign, for which they were now making very hasty preparations. The major's great experience, the gravity of his demeanour, and integrity of his character, made him a man of high trust in the army, and of a certainty the earl could find no better adviser.

He seemed to have taken a fancy to me, and when we parted asked me to call upon him at his quarters at the first convenient opportunity. I was rejoiced to have made such a friend, one who was a master of the arts of my profession. I assured him that the invitation was right welcome, and by no chance would be neglected.

CHAPTER VI.

A PASSAGE AT ARMS.

My business at the camp was to report to our colonel and wait orders. I suspected that I would be required to remain there henceforth, which, indeed, was only fit, as everything indicated an early movement of the army toward the frontier. My expectations were fulfilled, as I was ordered to be at headquarters on the following morning and to remain there henceforth. But for the remainder of that day I was at liberty to do as I chose. I felt a secret sorrow that my leave of absence had not been abridged at once. In that case the duel could not be fought. Fear did not enter into this feeling, I can truthfully say. I believe it was my better impulses, the conviction of the folly of such things, that condemned the affair in my mind.

I strolled about the camp, noting the evidences of haste and preparation. The men, English and Americans alike, seemed to be very cheerful. None had chafed at the delay and waste of time more than they, and plainly they were full of eagerness to be on the march. The comparison in the appearance of the men interested me much, and caused me to reflect how widely extended

were the dominions of his Majesty, and what resources he could summon for war. There were the English, fat, stocky, and red-faced, and with a fine girth of shoulder and chest. Sluggish in temperament, but very steady and enduring, I knew, because I had read history. Then there were our own Americans, taller and thinner and leaner than the English, but tougher and more wiry. At least, I believed them to be better fitted by training and experience for war in the deep woods and dense thickets, which was about the only kind of war that our continent yet knew. In truth, I felt a deal of pride in the appearance of our colonial troops. There was very little sheen of brilliant uniform and flash of gold epaulet about them, for, barring the Royal Americans, they were very plainly attired, but their steady eyes and sun-browned faces showed that they were the right men for forest work. I was well aware that our allies held us rather cheaply, as it is the custom of the people of old countries to look upon the people of new countries, and I could not repress a desire that our men might have a good opportunity to show their skill and courage. I hope there was nothing wrong in the feeling. At least, it might check the growing antipathy of the English and Americans toward each other which this attitude had caused.

On the outer edge of the encampment I found the Highland regiment to which my new friend, Major McLean, belonged. They were but lately arrived, and hitherto I had not had an opportunity of observing them closely. I found them to be well worthy of

examination, for they were a right wild and fierce-looking lot, and they made a great display of knives and of large swords, each of which had at the hilt some queer-looking basketwork, evidently designed as a protection for the hand. They were packing their baggage and cleaning their muskets, and a tremendous swearing in a strange, guttural tongue was going on. I knew it must be swearing, though I understood it not, for the sounds had all the flavour of oaths. Still, there was no fighting, though I inferred from their appearance that Major McLean's words about their belligerent character were no exaggeration of the truth.

I was somewhat shocked at the garb of these Highlanders, or rather at the lack of it. We were not accustomed in the colonies to the sight of men going around on bare legs in broad daylight. Only a day or two later one of these Highlanders, coming down to the city on some errand for his colonel, was arrested by a constable on Nassau Street for indecent exposure of his person. There was a great fuss about it, and the civil authorities and the military were arrayed very fiercely against each other. The colonel was in a fearful temper. Such an act as the arrest of his man was an unpardonable outrage, he said. It was an insult to all Scotchmen, and also to his Majesty the King, who had been known to don the Highland costume on certain notable occasions. But the aldermen of the city, most of whom had Dutch blood in their veins, were of a high obstinacy, and were not disposed to yield. They retained the prisoner in custody, and asserted that no

man should be seen on the streets of New York unless his body was properly clothed. Any exception was injurious to the public good, and likely to corrupt the morals of a young and growing province. The Governor himself was compelled to be a peacemaker, and through his intervention the unfortunate Highlander was released from the prison and sent back to his scantily attired comrades at the camp. But the general opinion of our people upheld the aldermen in their course.

While the Highlanders were very peaceful when I came up, I soon had evidence of the natural heat of their temper. Two of the men got into a quarrel over a tent pole, which, it seemed, each claimed. In a flash they had their dirks out, and I have no doubt much thick Scotch blood would have been shed had not Major McLean rushed up, and, with many violent words, forced them to return their dirks to their sheaths and go about their business. A moment or two later they were working together in as friendly a spirit as if they had been born twin brothers.

It was while I was looking at these men that Graham came up. I was disposed to be reserved with the man, as I believed he had been the chief cause of the quarrel the night before. But he appeared to be greatly improved by the daylight and the absence of drink, and refused to be unfriendly.

"Delighted to see you, Lieutenant Charteris," he said in a gay tone, "and doubly delighted to see you here. The contemplation of arms and armies is an

eminently fit occupation for a man who is so soon to test the edge of his own sword."

"Perhaps it would be better for both of us to save our swords for our real enemies," I could not refrain from saying.

"I would expect such a remark from a civilian, and not from you, Lieutenant Charteris," he returned in the same gay tone. "A soldier should always be happy when the chance comes to use his weapons, if not on the enemy, then in a friendly and gentlemanly passage at arms with his comrades."

"And I would expect such sentiments," I replied, "from a Frenchman, and not from a Scotchman, for I have been told always that the Scotch are a cold race, and have a very practical mind."

"Your supposition is true, if we accept it as a generality," he said; "but there are exceptions, and I am one of them. Perhaps you may ascribe it to my French education, for I passed four years in Paris, learning swordsmanship, the flavour of good wine, and other accomplishments which perhaps I had better not recount. Consequently, I have acquired to some extent the Gallic mode of looking at matters, and accept the duel as the arbitrament of gentlemen and one of the flowers of a polished civilization. I shall always reverence the memory of my fencing master, Adolphe la Bordais, a gentleman and a true artist in his profession. Of a family of some blood and no means, he taught swordsmanship for his bread and wine, and that he remained the gentleman he proved by often meeting

other gentlemen on the field of honour. It was in one of these encounters that he fell. I was present and saw it all. He made a false stroke, something that he had never done before, and for which I can not account to this day, and his antagonist profited by it to run him through the chest. The poor fellow in his dying agony said, 'I deserved it; only death could punish such an error'; and, turning to his antagonist, added, 'Had you not profited by my bad play, I should have held that I was for ever disgraced by meeting you.' Then he died very gracefully and contentedly. He was an honourable gentleman, and an illustrious example of devotion to one's art."

He talked on in this lively fashion, and in spite of myself I found him to be mightily entertaining, though I thought him to be something of a coxcomb and rattlepate. He was near the middle of one of his tales of Paris when we came almost face to face with Mr. Arthur and his daughter and a company of young officers, among whom was Spencer. Mr. Arthur was in affable mood, though he did not discard his usual pomposity. Long custom had made that an inseparable part of the man.

Graham saluted them with the grace and ease that acquaintance with fashionable life gives, and I bowed very low also. Spencer spoke to us as courteously as if he and I had no thought of shedding each other's blood. Mr. Arthur inclined his head slightly to me, and considerably lower to Graham. But I did not mind the slight. Marion asked me presently if I did not think

Mlle. de St. Maur had looked very handsome at the ball. I said I thought so, and I said it with emphasis. Whereupon she smiled that peculiar smile which caused me to flush a little as before. Then she undertook to plague me, but did not succeed, though she caused Mr. Arthur, who thought the conversation was of a different kind, to bestow a frown upon us. In a few minutes they passed on, and Graham, too, left me.

My last sight of Marion was when she and her father stepped into their carriage to return to the city. Spencer and all the other gay crowd were there to bid them good day, while I lingered in the distance, thinking about my duel.

Presently the daylight began to fade. The sun, tinging the earth with fire as he slid down the curves of the sky, went out of sight beyond the hills. The dusk followed the sunken sun, and I saw the new-lighted lamps of the city gleaming like an army of torches. The far hills of Staten Island crumbled away before the encroaching darkness, and night fell. In time the moon came out, and the light, as had been foretold, was sufficient for the duel.

I was at the appointed spot, back of old Peter Stuyvesant's pear-tree, a few minutes before the time, and was the first to arrive. Culverhouse came next.

"First on the ground, eh, Charteris?" he said cheerfully. "That speaks well. How are you feeling?"

He came close and scanned me critically. Then he put his hand upon my pulse.

"Very good!" he said approvingly. "Very good, indeed, for a beginner at this business. Your wrist is steady enough to handle a sword, and your eye does not show excitement. Do not misunderstand me, Charteris. I have never doubted your courage, but an amateur is likely to become nervous."

He carried two swords in their scabbards under his arm, and was preparing to show them to me when Spencer and Graham, accompanied by a third man, who was the surgeon, arrived. We saluted as politely as if we had met at a ball, and Graham, looking around, said the place was very suitable for the sport in which we were about to indulge.

It was a quiet little glade, beyond the hum of the camp, and hemmed in by high trees, though there was no obstruction overhead, and the moon shone down upon us very brightly.

Culverhouse and Graham drew to one side to examine the weapons. Spencer and I stood, stiffly erect, near each other. Neither spoke; nor did the surgeon, a placid, middle-aged man, who leaned calmly against a tree, and placed the little case that contained the tools of his trade at his feet.

Culverhouse and Graham seemed to be in no haste about their task. They drew out the swords—or rapiers perhaps it would be better to call them, for they were slender, Spanish-looking weapons—and examined them with great care. The bright blades upon which the moonbeams fell glinted like silver. They measured the rapiers carefully, and saw that they

were precisely the same in length and breadth. They bent the blades over their arms, and then released them, the tempered metal straightening itself out again with a sharp tang.

"They are all right," I heard Graham say. "True metal both of them, and as pretty weapons as I have seen in many a day. It would be a pleasure to use one of them myself."

They turned toward us, and Culverhouse exclaimed: "Hullo! who is this?"

I looked around, for I heard no footstep, but not ten feet from me a long, slender figure was leaning against a tree, and a pair of owl-like and inexpressive eyes set in an ugly countenance were regarding us. I recognized the boy Zebedee Crane at once.

"And where might you have come from?" exclaimed Graham, annoyed at the interruption.

"I might have dropped from the skies, an' ag'in I might have popped up from the ground," said the boy, drawlingly, "but I didn't do neither, mister."

"This is an affair of gentlemen," said Graham.

"Then I guess you need me, mister," replied the boy.

I was forced to laugh, and Spencer remarked, "He had you there, Graham,"

"What do you want?" asked Culverhouse.

The boy sat down on the trunk of a fallen tree, and said in his unchanging drawl—

"I thought I'd come an' see if you fellows fight each other any better'n you fight the French."

"You are impertinent, sir," said Spencer. "Now be off with you! This is no business of yours."

"I think I'll stay," said the boy. "It was a lot of trouble to come here to see you men chop each other up, an' I guess I won't go away now. 'Twould be too pretty a sight to miss."

"I'll try the flat of a sword on him," said Graham, flaring up. He drew his weapon and advanced threateningly toward the boy.

For the first time Zebedee's face expressed something besides stolid indifference. The upper and the lower jaws swung apart, and his mouth stretched almost from ear to ear in a grin as wide as the Hudson River.

"Waal, I guess not," he said, lengthening his drawl. "That's a pretty long blade you've got in your hand, mister, but it's not worth shucks when it's got to walk up and face this."

He reached down and drew from his flapping trousers' leg an enormous horse pistol, which he cocked with a sound like the grating of a huge chain dragged over stones. Then he levelled it squarely at Graham.

"Good God, man," exclaimed Graham, "don't shoot! What do you mean?"

"I mean it's time for you to stop and put your sword back in its place," said Zebedee, from whose face the grin had disappeared like a chasm closing after being opened momentarily by an earthquake's shock, "because there's pretty nigh a handful of slugs in this pistol of mine, an' if it goes off you'll be scattered all through the woods. Look out! That right forefinger of mine

is mighty set in its ways, an' I can't hold it back sometimes."

"Good heavens, man, I'll stop!" exclaimed Graham, who saw that he was in real danger.

He returned his sword to his scabbard and stepped back.

"That's right," said Zebedee, complacently. "A sojer ought to keep cool."

"Put up your pistol," said Culverhouse. "Nobody is going to assail you."

"I guess not," returned the boy. "But while I've got it out I guess I'll keep it out. I'll see that the two officers fight fair. I'll act as a sort of judge."

His manner indicated that he had made up his mind, and would not alter it. He rested his pistol upon his knee, but kept his finger upon the trigger, seeming to indicate that the coming duel was to be under his supervision, and that if either of us violated the rules in any particular, the offender would receive the contents of his horse pistol.

Culverhouse looked inquiringly at Graham.

"We cannot permit anything of this kind," said Graham. "Such a gawk should not be allowed to interfere in an affair of honour among gentlemen."

"Don't trouble yourself about me," said Zebedee. "I won't put in if the fellows fight fair. Now go on. I'm waitin'."

He looked so formidable with his pistol that our seconds, who had swords only, showed a prudent hesitation.

"Suppose we go on with our arrangements," said Culverhouse. "The gentleman was not invited to attend, but our principals can fight just as well, despite his presence."

After some demur Graham agreed, though he protested that it was very irregular. Then Spencer and I stepped aside and removed our coats.

"Be very careful," said Culverhouse to me, "and do not become excited. Watch your opponent's eye. I suspect that he has had more experience with the sword than you, so pay the utmost attention to your guard. Let him make the assault, and when the time comes for you to attack in return, let it be the straight, single thrust. But do not lunge too much."

In the course of a winter that I had spent in Albany, I had taken some lessons from a travelling French fencing-master, whose beautiful sword-play had excited much admiration, and I believed that I had been a rather apt pupil. Nevertheless, I thanked him for his advice, which I knew was given with the best intentions.

Then Spencer and I took our positions, facing each other in the centre of the glade. The surgeon opened his leather case, and Culverhouse and Graham stood by to watch our play with the weapons. I still felt a very strong disinclination either to kill or to be killed, but my nerves were steady, and I looked straight into Spencer's eye. Our seconds handed us the rapiers. We bowed to each other, Culverhouse gave the signal, and we stood ready for thrust or parry.

Spencer feinted with his weapon, and then, recovering, made a quick thrust. More by luck than skill I caught his blade on mine and warded off the blow.

"Englishman knows more about the business, but American has the stronger wrist," I heard Zebedee say.

Then for nearly a minute we stood facing each other, holding our weapons ready, but scarcely moving them. My muscles were strained and my breath was short, but my antagonist was in the same condition. I remembered Culverhouse's advice to stand on the defensive. So I stiffened my wrist, and stared into Spencer's eye. Presently he tried the lunge a second time. Again I parried with success, and was quick enough with the return blow to give him a fillip across the hand, which cut the skin and drew a slender red thread of blood. Spencer gritted his teeth and said something under his breath. For the first time an angry look came over his face.

"First blood for the American," said Zebedee. "I wouldn't have thought it."

The cut, mere scratch though it was, seemed to arouse Spencer's temper, and he assailed me vigorously, thrusting with a rapidity that compelled me to keep an exceedingly wary eye and ready hand.

Presently Spencer made a rapid thrust at my chest. I parried it, but he came back so quickly with a nasty jab that the point of the blade caught me across the arm, and, ripping through my shirt sleeve, made a long gash that bled freely.

"That was a good one," said Zebedee. "'Twas quickness that done it."

The flowing of the blood and the stinging sensation in my arm angered me, but fortunately I was able to control my temper and to remember that caution was my best policy. The cut was not deep enough to weaken me.

We fenced slowly and cautiously for a minute or two. I thought by the look in Spencer's eye that he was going to make another vicious attack, and was not deceived, for he tried again precisely the same movement that had been so successful before. But I was watching for this blow, and when his blade flashed I leaped aside and with an upward thrust caught him across the arm. As the blood flowed down from his arm he stabbed angrily at me. But my blade caught his, and then, with a quick but powerful twist which the French fencing-master had taught me, I sent his sword flying into the air. It fell to the ground and clanged as it struck a stone.

Disarmed as he was, Spencer showed no lack of courage. He faced me steadily, the blood from his wounded arm dripping upon the ground.

"I have had enough!" I exclaimed, throwing my sword across his.

"Enough, indeed! It's too much for both of you!" exclaimed a loud voice, as Major McLean, followed by a file of soldiers, pushed into the glade. "This is a pretty state of affairs when two of the King's officers are slicing up each other with the swords that should be reserved for the French."

The major's face was very red, and his eyes showed much anger.

"Major McLean," said Graham, who evidently knew him well, "I was not aware that a Highlander, an officer of the Black Watch, had any conscientious scruples against fighting."

"Nor has he," returned the major, "when the fighting is done at the proper time and against the proper persons. And you, sir," he said, turning to me, "I thought you were too sedate a man to be engaged in such nonsense and wickedness as this!"

"I could not honourably avoid it," I said deprecatingly.

"It is always honourable to avoid folly," he said severely.

Spencer undertook to utter some excuse, but the wrathful old man abruptly bade him to be silent. He ordered all four of us to deliver up our swords, and when we had done so he notified us that we were under arrest. I looked around for Zebedee, but he was gone like a ghost.

Then, surrounded by the soldiers, the major marched duellists and seconds off to the camp.

CHAPTER VII.

LOUDOUN'S WAY OF MAKING WAR.

My first sensation after our arrest was of shame. The major's stern reproof reached the quick. Somehow I cared much for the old man's good opinion, and it was mortification to think that I had lost it. Moreover, what he said about our affair coincided so well with the thoughts that had troubled me after the challenge and before the duel that I could not persuade myself by any sort of deceit that he had not spoken the truth.

We were escorted into the camp as if we had been spies taken within the lines. We walked along in a glum silence. The sentinels looked at us, and an officer or two lounging near regarded us with some curiosity. Culverhouse and I were placed in one tent, and Spencer and Graham were sent to another. What became of the surgeon I did not notice. A red-headed Highlander was ordered to stand guard before our tent door.

"If they try to escape," said the major to the Highlander, "act as if they belonged to the clan that is the enemy of yours."

The Highlander showed his wolf's teeth under his red moustache, and his eyes twinkled. Looking at him, I had no desire to attempt an escape. Then the major strode away, leaving us to our thoughts and our Highlander.

They had left us a candle, which was sputtering in a little wooden sconce that hung from one of the tent poles. But there was enough light for me to see that Culverhouse's face as usual was without expression.

"Well," I said, "our duel has ended for Spencer and me in a manner that neither of us expected—in the guardhouse."

"It seems to me that both of you ought to think an end in the guardhouse is better than an end down there, under the clods," said Culverhouse, flipping his hand toward the earth.

There was good philosophy in what he said, I was bound to admit.

"You bore yourself very well," continued Culverhouse, "and showed that you had a good wrist and eye for the sword; better, in fact, than I believed you had. You don't mind my saying I thought that your life was largely at Spencer's disposal, and I was as much surprised as he probably was at the result."

"I thank you for a revision of your bad opinion," I said.

"It was not your courage, merely your swordsmanship, that I called into question," he said. "Now, if you will kindly excuse me, I think I will go to sleep."

He lay down on a blanket, and in a few minutes

was asleep. His words had started me on a new train of thought, and I felt that, after all, I did not have much cause for shame. I, a colonial officer, had been victorious over an accomplished swordsman from the mother country. As I have said, we were extremely sensitive in the colonies to English aspersions on our skill or courage, and my countrymen of my own rank and station would be far from condemning me. That I knew. The thought was so pleasant that I fell asleep.

The next morning Culverhouse was taken away, for what purpose I knew not, though I supposed that he would be released as being less culpable than I. Soon after he had gone, the villain of a Highlander thrust his head in at the door and grinned at me. The lump-headed fellow did not speak, but indulged in some amazing pantomime which I supposed he intended as a description, by gesture, of my arrest the night before. I picked up the wooden sconce which had held the candle and threatened him with it. Then he retired with a grin so wide that it led all the rest, and I caught an occasional glimpse of his bare and unsymmetrical legs as he tramped his little beat in front of the tent door.

Presently I had another visitor, and this time it was Major McLean.

"Major," I said, as soon as I saw his seamed, brown face, "grant me one request. Take away that hideous fellow you have put at my door and give me a new guard."

"Oh no," said the major, with a smile. "Sandy is just the man for the place. That's Sandy McCorkle, whom I have known for a generation, a most honest fellow, and something of a humorist. That is why I put him here. I thought he might cheer you as well as guard you."

"Possibly the Scotch idea of humour differs from the American," I said.

"One's opinion of humour is like the colour of the sea," he said. "It depends on the atmosphere. Your atmosphere just now conduces to serious reflection, or at least it should do so. It is a very grave offence for two of our young officers to be fighting a duel when they ought to be making every preparation to meet the Frenchmen."

"I do not see how I could have done otherwise," I said.

"Was it your first duel?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied.

"Were you not afraid?" he asked.

"I am a soldier," I replied proudly.

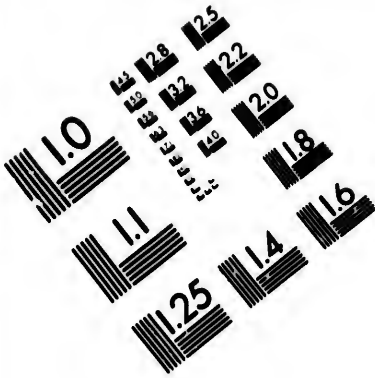
"I have known some soldiers who were very much afraid," he said.

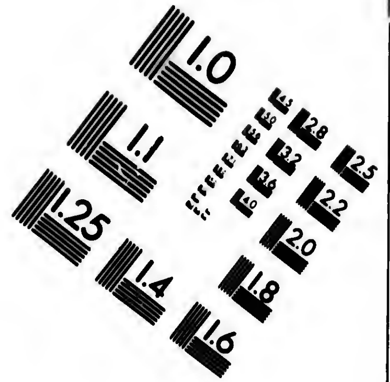
To this I had no reply to make.

"You have had teaching and practice with the sword?" he said interrogatively.

I answered in the affirmative, though I did not see the drift of his questions.

"You handled your weapon well," he said meditatively. "That was a peculiar twist you gave to your





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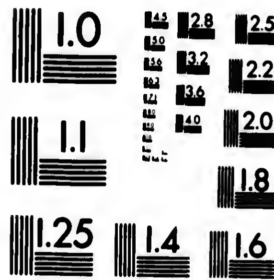

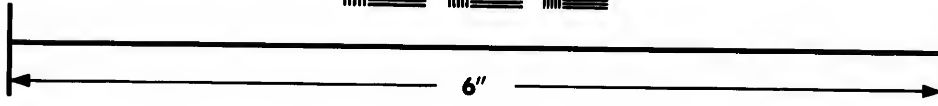

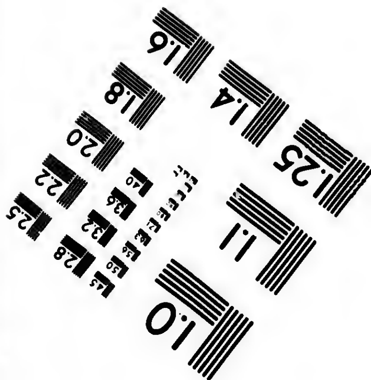

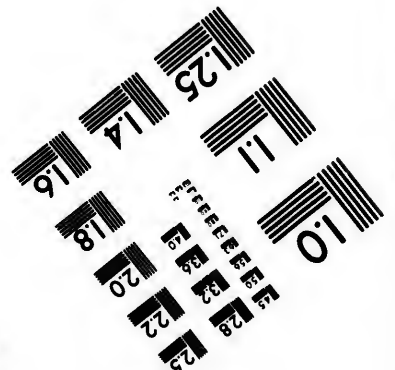

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wrist when you disarmed Lieutenant Spencer. I had not seen its like before. Where did you learn it?"

"It was taught to me by a Frenchman," I said.

"Then I wish you would teach it to me," he said, with a sudden display of enthusiasm. "It was prettily done, my boy. For a time, when I saw his fierce attack, I thought he had you; but when you sent his weapon whirling, it was like a turn in a play."

"Why! did you see what had happened before that?" I asked, in surprise.

"See it? Of a certainty, of a certainty!" he said. "I could not miss so fine a sight. On my word, you did well for a youngster! I thought once I would have to interfere, and make the arrests too soon. It is a pity to mar good sport. But that turn of your wrist decided it, and relieved me of the necessity for premature action. It was prettily done, I repeat, and I have come around to wish you a very good morning."

Then, without another word, he departed, leaving me very much surprised, and, in truth, very much pleased also. This pleasure was increased an hour or two later, when Culverhouse sauntered unconcernedly into the tent.

"What does this mean?" I asked enviously. "What a fine air you have! Have you been appointed commander-in-chief in place of the earl?"

"I suppose I could get the position if I wanted it," returned Culverhouse, "but I am not an aspirant for it. I thought I would tell you that you would not be hanged or drawn or quartered for fighting that duel.

In some accidental way—for I cannot ascribe it to your merit or your manners—you have made a great friend of that old fire-eater Major McLean, and he is shouting your praises about the camp. Besides, we are so busy with the preparations against the French that our seniors haven't time to bother about the delinquencies of subalterns. So if you will make a great effort to be discreet, and to talk very little, they will probably forget all about you before night."

I found that Culverhouse was a true prophet of good. Late in the afternoon the brusque but friendly major came to the tent, and told me to go about my business, which I was very happy to do. No official cognizance of the duel was ever taken, and I have no doubt now that, considering all the circumstances, especially the known ill-feeling between the English and the colonial officers, it was the part of wisdom to overlook the matter.

But my good luck in disarming my antagonist gave me quite a reputation among my countrymen, which I sometimes found a trifle inconvenient, for I had no desire to pose as a hero of the duelling ground.

For some days we were in a great state of bustle. An army, like a woman, must make much fuss and preparation before starting on a journey, and the whole camp was in a tumult every day from early morning until long after the sun had slid out of sight over the hills. The generals and the colonels were engrossed in consultations, the captains and the lieutenants were swearing at the sergeants and the corporals, the

sergeants and the corporals were swearing at the privates, the privates were swearing at the horses and the oxen, which, being unable to swear at all, had perforce to take it in silence.

But there was a pleasure in all this noise and work. We felt that we were doing something at last, that the enemy no longer had a monopoly of activity and accomplishment. There was an end to dumb sloth, and we talked confidently of victory and glory.

In the course of these activities I saw something of Spencer and Graham. I did not seek them, but in the close quarters of the camp it was not possible to avoid them. Spencer was stiff, but not discourteous. Graham was inclined to be more open. He seemed even to seek my friendship, complimenting me upon my success in the duel, and asking many questions about the colonies, in a tone less patronizing than he had assumed at first. Culverhouse told me that despite his faults he was a good soldier, and such I found his reputation to be in the camp.

We were doomed to alterations of hope and disappointment. The days passed, and we were still camped in the city. All our bustle and our toil seemed to come to naught. The army was like a waggon mired deep in the mud. We could not budge it. The fault was with the driver, Culverhouse said. I knew that he meant Loudoun, and I knew also that what he said was true. All this time tales of the bloody atrocities committed by the enemy on the frontier were coming to us, and it seemed that no real effort would ever be made to stop them.

The de St. Maurs stayed on, for Loudoun was as lax in the matter of the prisoners as in other matters, and could not be induced to act. I had some opportunities for seeing mademoiselle, and found her as superior in mind as in appearance. In truth, Marion would twit me about her almost every time we met, but I soon ceased to mind her banter, which I think had a little bit of spite in it, owing to the old truth that a pretty woman likes to keep all the men she knows at her feet.

About a week after the duel I came down into the city in the lack of anything else to do, and spent a half-hour at the Royal Exchange watching the merchants and agents, who knew how to make the most of time, and wasted no hours. Martin Groot was there, and perforce I endured his gibes at the military people, knowing that they were so well deserved. Tiring of the place, I walked toward Broadway, and on the way I saw some boys—and a few men, too, for the matter of that—following six British soldiers, who were marching two abreast in very precise style. Knowing that soldiers had ceased to be an object of curiosity in New York, I inquired of one of the civilians why he followed them.

"Why, they are going to be quartered on Herman Snell," he said, seeming to be surprised that I did not know, "and Herman says they shan't come into his house."

I foresaw trouble at once. This quartering of soldiers without law or reason upon private citizens was a very

sore subject with our people, and Loudoun, with an affected contempt for the provinces, as he called them, had made himself especially offensive to us by more than once attempting such things.

I followed, though at a distance, out of respect to my uniform, determined to see the end of it, for I knew Herman Snell was not a man to submit easily.

Snell had a square, solid brick house on Broadway, and when the soldiers approached he was sitting in the open doorway smoking his Dutch pipe, his ample proportions filling up all the passage. Though I guessed that some one had given him warning, he paid no attention until they had halted abruptly at his doorstep and let their musket butts clank upon the stones.

"This is Mr. Herman Snell?" said the leader of the soldiers.

"Since you say so, my friend, it must be so," replied the Dutchman, taking a long whiff at his pipe.

"Then it is so, is it not?" returned the corporal, impatiently.

"It is so," said Snell.

"We are directed by the commander-in-chief to quarter ourselves in your house," said the corporal.

"It's against the law," said Snell.

"It's the earl's orders," said the corporal, who seemed to be a stubborn fellow.

"I'm no soldier," he replied, taking a long whiff at his pipe, "and the earl's orders don't apply to me."

The sergeant hesitated, evidently waiting for Herman

to get out of the way. But the broad-bodied Dutchman remained in the passage and smoked on.

"Will you let us in, or must we come by force?" asked the sergeant, at last.

"This is my house," said Snell, "and you have no right to enter it."

The contention had caused quite a crowd to gather, and one and all were with Snell. They began to groan and hoot, which incensed the sergeant very much, and urged him on to his task. He advanced as if he would enter by force. I saw no way for him to do it except by cutting down Snell, and I hastened forward to prevent bloodshed if I could. I asked the sergeant to go away and report that he had been denied entrance at Snell's house. He respected my superior uniform, but insisted upon obedience to his orders.

I had drawn him down the steps that I might talk to him, and he turned again to enter, followed by the other soldiers. A great uproar arose in the crowd. Gravel and pebbles were thrown, and I looked for a dangerous riot when a strong voice was heard demanding order, and I saw Mayor John Cruger pushing his way through the crowd. His appearance was in the nick of time, for the crowd could not refuse him respect, and the soldiers might listen to him when they would not listen to me.

"What is the matter, Herman?" he asked of Snell, who was holding his fat pipe meditatively in his hand.

"These soldiers wish to take charge of my house contrary to law," replied Herman.

The mayor looked inquiringly at me, and I explained in detail. He warmly espoused the cause of Herman, who, he said, was entirely within his rights. By taking the burden of the matter upon himself, he induced the sergeant to return with his men to the British camp, and they went away, leaving Snell smoking his pipe in triumph in his undefiled doorway.

I heard of several other such incidents, and they were not calculated to soothe the increasing hatred our people felt toward Loudoun, who was proving himself almost as great a plague as the French, without their excuse. It seemed that he wished to irritate us to the utmost, and to prove to himself and his kind, if not to us, the superiority of the English over their American descendants. This, I take it, is a poor way of treating your allies in war, and, as I have said before, led in the end to great consequences.

Loudoun's temper was not improved by the sharp comments upon his course which appeared from time to time in the *Post Boy* and *Gazette* and *Mercury*, where one could see now and then some smart epigrams and allusions, the meaning of which no one mistook. Loudoun would foam at the mouth at reading them, so it was said, and would threaten loudly to destroy the presses and type and imprison the editors. But he never dared attempt the execution of his threat, for the liberty of the printing press had been established in the great Zenger trial, of which all people in New York had heard. In truth, I enjoy a good smart gibe myself in the newspapers when it is at the expense of somebody

else, and so, I believe, do most other people. Several times did I enter a coffee-house to see a crowd of a score or more, some of them most substantial citizens, all listening with great enjoyment to the reading of a newspaper which contained a joke or pasquinado levelled at Loudoun or his panders. Now and then the English officers themselves would share in the sport, though those things caused at least seven duels that autumn between Americans and Englishmen.

But Loudoun went on his luxurious way. The report that Montcalm was advancing on Albany proved to be false, and we were saved that disgrace, at least. But it was wholly true that Webb had abandoned the defence of the border. In fact, he came down to New York and joined Loudoun in his dissipations and debaucheries. Every day almost we heard tales of awful atrocities from the frontier, how entire families had been destroyed by the Indians, but Loudoun and Webb and the army stayed on in New York. The two generals played cards, and drank wine at a prodigious rate, and the city was gay with concerts, theatrical performances smacking much of the wickedness of the Old World, assemblies, balls, and all other forms of entertainment, good or bad, that idleness and wealth could devise. On all sides it was said that it was the gayest and most corrupt season ever known in New York.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FEAST AND A STORM.

It was not in nature for us who were very young to refrain from our share in these festivities, however much one might condemn them as out of place. In truth, the only choice left us was either to join in them or mope alone. I did each at times, and about a week after the duel, the subject having been well-nigh forgotten in the rush of gaiety, Culverhouse came to me and asked me to make one of a party at a turtle feast at Cotton's Inn, on the East River, a species of entertainment very popular at the time, and one from which I have often derived much enjoyment.

"Only one condition is put upon you," said Culverhouse, "and it is that you bring a fair partner. Every one is expected to contribute his or her share to the gaiety of the entertainment."

I accepted both the invitation and the condition with great readiness, and bethought me of Marion as my possible partner if I could escape the vigilant eye of her father, who seemed to be as sure as ever that I deserved watching. But second thought convinced me

such action would not be right; I ought to be open in all that I did. I decided to ask Mlle. de St. Maur, and was glad that I had come to such decision.

Mlle. de St. Maur was quite willing, nay, delighted, she said. How could a young girl, to whom the way was opened, refuse to take part in the gaieties going on about her? And the seigneur, whose position had grown most unpleasant, and whom our generals had begun to treat in some sort as a kind of privileged spy, though it was wholly Loudoun's fault that he remained so long, seemed pleased at my attention to his daughter, and consented that she should go. He was willing for once to forego his strict French notions of propriety and let her make one of the party, since Mrs. Kennedy was to accompany us and have Mlle. de St. Maur in her especial charge.

Mlle. de St. Maur and I rode together down Queen Street to the rendezvous, Mrs. Kennedy, who was not so strict as the seigneur, saying nothing against it. As we passed the houses of our aristocracy along this fashionable avenue I could see more than one fair face at the window gazing at us. I will admit that I felt a certain pride, for, as I have hinted already, Mlle. de St. Maur was no ordinary girl in appearance, and on horseback she looked particularly well. I might as well say, at this very point, that our girls that season showed considerable jealousy of Mlle. de St. Maur, of which they should have been ashamed, for she was in a measure our guest. I had heard of the spiteful remark made by several that she ought to be in Quebec

with her own people, where she belonged. But she was very beautiful, and women are women the world over.

The rendezvous was at Governor de Lancey's elegant country seat on the Bowery Road, where we found a fine company of some forty persons had gathered. Governor de Lancey himself had just come from the city in the great state which was his custom. It had been an official visit of much importance, and he rode in his gilded chariot drawn by four snow-white horses, with outriders in brilliant livery.

He seemed somewhat oppressed by the cares of state which were weighing very heavily then upon the important men of the colony, but he showed much gaiety when he saw us. The Revolution has come, and we look at men and affairs in a manner somewhat different from that of the old days, but I shall not undertake to pass any criticism upon Governor de Lancey. His enemies say that he was haughty, arrogant, and intolerable; his friends say that he was the best of comrades, genial, self-sacrificing, and a lover of his country. All I know is that he was a man of great spirit, wit, culture, and strength, and as I was neither an adherent of the house of de Lancey nor of the rival house of Livingston, but kept my own counsel and followed my own course, I think I can speak with a fair degree of impartiality.

He took us down a leafy, shaded avenue to his house, a noble structure of brick, three stories in height. He served us with lemon punch, showed us his pictures and works of sculpture, many of them from the best

masters of Europe, and sent us on our way, saying, with a bit of a sigh, that he wished he was as young as we were, and could go with us and enjoy the minutes as they passed, instead of grubbing over dry orders and reports, and seeking to provide for the future.

About half of us were on horseback and the remainder in Italian chaises, a gentleman and lady in each chaise, and our programme was to take luncheon together at noon at Cotton's Inn, do some idle fishing in the East River in the afternoon, varied with tea-drinking and card-playing at the inn if we felt like it, a dinner afterward, and then a pleasant ride home in the cool of the evening.

It was near the close of September, and it had been warm in the city, where the houses are so tall as to shut off the air, many of them being a full three stories in height. It had been very close and heavy, too, making the breathing difficult, but after we had come upon the Bowery Road we found a breeze blowing which made it more pleasant, and the coolness increased as we rode northward past the marshes and meadows and ponds and outcroppings of rock which cover so much of the central part of our island. Very valuable some of this land is, too, for farming purposes, owing to its contiguity to the city and its easy reach, therefore, of a great market. In truth, there are many so sanguine of our city's future that they predict its encroachment some day upon these farms. But, while I am proud of New York, and confident of its increasing greatness, I can scarce subscribe to so much as that.

Mlle. de St. Maur and I had dropped back a little behind the crowd. There was a great clatter of talk and flurry of laughter ahead of us, but the others, being fully occupied with themselves, paid no attention to us, nor did we to them. As I had expected, Marion came with Spencer, and they were near the head of the party.

I was acting the part of guide and instructor to mademoiselle, describing this and that object of interest, when a man came out of some woods at the roadside and looked very fixedly at us two. He was a mean-looking fellow, ill clad, and I thought his stare impertinent. I was preparing to bid him begone about his business when I noticed a great look of surprise, mingled with some alarm, upon Mlle. de St. Maur's face. She gazed at the fellow, who returned her look for a few moments, then turned and walked carelessly into the woods.

"He seemed to know you," I said to mademoiselle.

"He does know me, unless I am greatly mistaken in the person," she replied quite frankly, "but I never expected to see him here."

I was silent for a little while. I had some curiosity on the subject, but it was contrary to courtesy for me to question her. She turned to me presently.

"You do not ask me who he is?" she said.

"No, I have not," I replied.

"Then do not do so," she said very earnestly. "If anything should come of that man's presence here, do not think that I or my father had any connection with it. I did not know until a quarter of an hour ago

that he was here, and my father does not know it yet. We owe you for kindnesses, let us owe you for one more."

I do not like mysteries, but, looking into Louise de St. Maur's beautiful and frank face, and into her eyes as honest as the sunshine, I knew that she was telling the absolute truth. So, putting it into as complimentary words as I could, I said I would believe no evil of the Seigneur of St. Maur or his daughter.

We increased our pace and rejoined the others, for we had no wish to cause remark. Yet Marion, who was in most becoming attire, and was perhaps the second handsomest in the party, gave me several saucy glances, which I endured with a fair degree of equanimity. Our girls still showed the little jealousy of Mlle. de St. Maur to which I have alluded, and, being her cavalier, I exerted myself to find her agreeable attentions besides my own, which I hope were not disagreeable, Culverhouse and young James de Lancey, the same who afterwards behaved so gallantly in the campaigns, assisting me.

One holds the bright days of one's early youth—the days of youth are not all bright by any means—in tender memory, and this was one of the brightest of mine. A smart breeze from the East River drove away the heat and gave the air the crisp, sparkling flavour of early autumn which is so inspiring to heart and brain. The brown foliage fluttered and rustled, and as we rode along we caught glimpses of the river, a perfect blue under a perfect blue sky. The war had closed for me for the day.

Cotton's place was very old. It is said that Peter Stuyvesant built the house generations ago as a place for trade with the Indians, but it had been used many years now for turtle feasts and other such entertainments. If there was any man who knew more and better ways than old Tom Cotton of serving crab and lobster and oysters and every kind of fish, he was not to be found along our coast.

Our day passed most pleasantly and rapidly. Sometimes I was in the inn, partaking of the tea which the ladies poured, and of which I am not overfond, and sometimes I was in a boat fishing with Mlle. de St. Maur or some other.

Toward evening the air grew heavy and warm again. It seemed to be full of damp, and the clouds gathered fast. The sultry conditions portended a storm, and we broke up our party in a hurry. Those in the chaises started first, and drove toward the city as fast as the nature of the road would permit. I was assisting Mlle. de St. Maur upon her horse when Marion and Spencer galloped past us, and bade us hurry if we expected to reach the city before the storm burst. Mademoiselle looked around for Mrs. Kennedy, but that lady seemed to have overlooked her charge in the confusion of the moment. At least we did not see her.

Off rattled the chaises, with those on horseback following behind, and Mlle. de St. Maur and I last. We soon saw that we had need to hurry, for the skies were blackening at a prodigious rate, and the increasing dampness of the air betokened the speedy arrival of rain.

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We became a flying procession. On we went at a gallop through the fields and among the woods of maple and spruce and hickory. The air was very close and heavy. In the south-west the clouds were blackest, and presently the lightning began to flash there, followed by the heavy, threatening rumble of the distant thunder.

The approach of night, combined with the clouds, created a twilight darkness, and the head of our flying column became invisible. Presently the south-west began to moan, and I knew it was the signal of the coming shower. The rain streaks appeared across the sky, and the leaves rustled before the rush of wind which brought the rain with it. A cooling breath came through the hot air, and a whiff of rain struck us. I saw a great tree well foliaged beside the road, and I suggested to mademoiselle that we should stop under it for shelter. I shouted to the others to stop there also, but they must have failed to hear me, for when we halted under the tree we saw the last couple disappearing around a curve of the road ahead of us.

But I considered that we were more lucky than they. The rain came with a swoop and a dash, the first drops pattering on the earth like bullets and kicking up the dust in little clouds, which the next drops drove back to the earth and turned into mud. Overhead the leaves rattled under the shower, but we were dry for the present.

"They have left us, mademoiselle," I said, which was a self-evident fact.

"You have a pleasant life here," she said.

"New York is a gay town," I replied.

"The brown-haired lady, Miss Arthur, is very pretty," she said.

"Yes," I said, wondering why she should take up the subject, "Marion is a very pretty girl, and she's my kinswoman, third or fourth cousin, I've never figured out exactly which."

"I've heard that she's to be much more nearly related to you," she said. "I congratulate you, Lieutenant Charteris."

"Nothing of the kind," I said in great haste. "Marion and I are old playfellows, and we like each other a great deal, but not that way. Her father hates the sight of me, and, besides, I think she is beginning to look with favour upon Spencer, with whom I fought a duel once."

"I heard about that," she said. "You disarmed him."

"Luck more than skill," I replied.

Then she turned the conversation to other matters, but she was very lively and bright. She told me of her life in Canada, in Quebec, and in the country, her education at a convent in France, and her visit to the great and fashionable world of Paris with her father. I was interested so deeply that I scarce noticed the violence of the rain and the increasing darkness. The water at last found its way through the foliage and sprinkled us both. I suggested that we should dismount and stand against the trunk of the tree for protection,

but this, too, soon failed. All the foliage of the tree was soaked, and it dripped water steadily.

"Mademoiselle," I said, "we must abandon our tree and get back to the city somehow. Are you afraid of a wetting?"

"I've spent half my life in the Canadian woods," she said, "and it wouldn't become me to fear a little rain."

If it did not become her, it certainly would not become me, and, assisting her upon her horse, I mounted mine, and we rode on. The rain, instead of coming in sudden bursts and puffs, had settled into a steady downpour, which, however, was none the less wetting. We plodded along, trying to keep our backs to it. Riders and horses were soaked, but Mlle. Louise was cheerful, and appeared to look upon it as an adventure worth the telling afterward. I shouted several times for the others, but they seemed to have gone too far ahead to hear us.

The rain decreased presently and the clouds began to clear away, but we could not see either our comrades or any human habitation. I noticed, however, in the darkness, that we had wandered from the road, and were following a sort of foot-path. It seemed to lead in the right direction, and Mlle. Louise and I whipped up our horses, anxious to reach the city and dry clothing as soon as possible. Twenty yards further on the path ended at a marsh, entirely too black and too muddy to be entered. There was nothing for us to do but to turn back or seek a way through the woods at the imminent risk of having our eyes scratched out by low boughs.

"This is your country; what are you going to do?" asked mademoiselle with a droll look.

I was lost, and I did not like to confess it, but I knew that she knew it. It hurt my pride to be lost on Manhattan Island, with whose woods and hills and marshes I thought I was so thoroughly acquainted. I was sorry that we had not passed the tree and gone on with the others. The water was dripping from both of us, and our discouraged horses hung down their heads and breathed wearily.

"I think we had better ride back to the road," I said.

Back we went, but the road seemed to have disappeared. The path merely wound around through the woods, and then abutted again upon a marsh.

"I may have lost all idea of direction," I said desperately, "but at least I have my voice left."

I shouted again and again as loud as I could, but no reply came. The water dripped from the rain-soaked trees to the muddy earth, and the frogs in the new pools began to croak. I looked out of the corner of my eye at Mlle. de St. Maur to see what she thought of me, but I could see no expression of derision on her face. I was humble, and she was considerate. In my heart I cursed the old Dutchmen who had laid off the cow paths through this part of the island, making them twist and curve and end nowhere, just as they make their long pipe-stems twist and curve.

"There is one thing sure, mademoiselle," I said contritely, "this is an island, and if we keep on riding

straight ahead we are bound to come some time to the sea somewhere."

"Suppose we try it," she said.

I fixed upon the direction in which I thought the city lay, and we urged our tired horses forward. We were not even in a path, but splashed sometimes through marsh and then pressed through thick-grown bushes. At last I saw water shining through trees, and I concluded that I had missed my course a little and come out on the North River.

When we rode up to the water, I found that it was only a big pond, but it brought my wits back to me, for I knew it. It was the great pond on the Rosehill farm of John Watts, the same who was the brother-in-law of Governor de Lancy. I had skated on it many a time, and over there beside it stretched the post-road. Beyond I could see the long avenue of elm-trees leading to Mr. Watts's country house. I had found myself, and I announced the fact joyfully to Mlle. de St. Maur, who, I have no doubt, was as glad as I, even though she had spent half her life in the Canadian woods.

We had now only to turn into the post-road and follow it to the city. We were wet through, and splashed with mud to boot, and right glad we were to see the friendly lights of New York, though we had the consolation the next day of knowing that many of our comrades had fared no better.

It was somewhat late when we reached Mr. Kennedy's home on Broadway, where the de St. Maur's were yet guests, but the lights were still twinkling for

us, as Mrs. Kennedy and some others who had gone from the same house had arrived before us. The seigneur helped to receive us with an anxiety relieved by our arrival. But I do not think he would have allowed his daughter to go to a turtle feast again without his own company.

I bade them good night, and remounted my horse to ride to my quarters and dry clothing.

As I passed the corner I saw a man leaning against the fence. The light from one of the street lanterns fell on his face, and I recognized him at once as the fellow who had startled Mlle. de St. Maur in the morning. He had passed completely out of my mind during the day, but his reappearance in the city aroused my curiosity. I had promised Mlle. de St. Maur not to concern myself about him, but I thought it no harm to ask him what he was doing there, especially as his appearance was not encouraging.

For reply, he gave me an evil look, and bade me go about my business.

I warned him that the stocks were for such as he, and rode on. But I could not dismiss him again from my mind so readily. He had spoken with a foreign accent, and, putting that and Mlle. de St. Maur's knowledge of him together, I concluded that he was a French spy, not that I believed for a moment in the complicity of the de St. Maurs.

I thought over the matter much on my way to my quarters. I decided that I would say nothing and keep a watch for the fellow. After all, what harm

could a spy do us? There was nothing for him to learn about our army, except what all the world knew—namely, that we were lounging our time away. If he could count our numbers and find out how many cannon and rifles and pounds of powder and lead we had, so could any street boy in New York.

Beyond that the general-in-chief himself seemed to know nothing.

I was wet, and my bones were stiffening, but my first duty was to my horse. I took him to the little stable in the rear of my quarters and fed him, returning thence in order that I might do as much and more for myself.

When I came to the front of the house, which stood a bit back from the sidewalk, I saw a man lounging in the street twenty or thirty yards away. His face was turned from me, but the figure was not altogether unfamiliar. I knew in a moment that it was the man whom Mlle. de St. Maur and I had met in the wood, the same to whom I had spoken when I left Mr. Kennedy's house, the one who was so much upon my mind just then. I had marked him well, and I was sure.

If I had been older, less given to the imagination and impulse of youth, I would have gone into the house and to bed, leaving the man to take care of himself and to do as he chose. But I did the other. I believed that this man was following and watching me, and I felt a certain anger because of it. Moreover, my curiosity was raised to a great pitch.

Without hesitation I opened the gate, entered the

street, and walked towards him. But he slipped away from me, and when I increased my gait he increased his to the same degree. Other people were in the streets, for since the war and the coming of the soldiers ours had grown to be an ungodly town, and people were not always in bed at proper hours. They paid no attention either to me or to the man whom I was pursuing.

The fellow led me such a dance that I was on the point of abandoning the pursuit as not worth the while. I stopped, but he stopped too, and looked back at me. The distance was not too great to show me when I saw his face that I was right in taking him to be the spy, for such I had mentally called him.

His manner indicated a desire to lead me on, and, seeing it, I was nothing loath. I could not divine his purpose, but I had sufficient interest now to follow up the matter and see. When I started he started also, and on we went again. He looked back presently, as if to make sure that I was following, and then turned into Broad Street, walking towards its foot. On the way I passed old Peter Vlieck, one of the night watchmen, a big, heavy fellow, whom I knew. But he stalked solemnly up the street, looking straight ahead of him, in search of what wickedness I knew not, and paid no attention to me.

At the foot of the street, and directly in front of my man, was the Royal Exchange, looking very large and solemn in the dusk. The open lower floor within the arches, so busy, so full of life by day, was deserted

and still. Turning back one more look to see that I was there, my man left the street and walked under one of the arches. This, as plain as day, was an invitation to a meeting, an interview, or something, and without delay I followed.

He had gone to the far side of the space, and was leaning against the brickwork of one of the arches. He made no effort to conceal his features, but owing to the poorness of the light, I could not see them very distinctly.

"You have been following me," he said, "and now you have overtaken me. What do you want?"

I was not at all sure what I wanted, or that I wanted anything at all, so I replied—

"If I have followed you, you followed me first; it's merely making things even."

He uttered some impatient exclamation, and demanded again my business with him. I thought it best to keep cool, so I also leaned negligently against one of the arches.

"One thing I had in mind when I followed you," I said, "was to ask you what progress you are making in your business."

"What business?" he asked.

"Spying, seeking information about the English that you can take to your comrades the French."

"You guess well, Lieutenant Charteris. That's my occupation."

"It seems a waste of energy and useless risk of one's life."

"Perhaps it is. It was hardly worth while for me to come to New York for information about your armies, but I have friends, dear friends, here whom I wished to see."

"Who?" I asked.

"Oh, there may be many," he replied carelessly, "the names of whom I will not tell, but I might mention, for instance, the Seigneur and Mlle. de St. Maur."

"Mlle. de St. Maur may know you," I replied. "In fact, I have every reason to think that she does, but I have equal reason also to think that she does not like you."

"Don't be too sure of that," he replied. "I may be much more to Mlle. de St. Maur and Mlle. de St. Maur may be much more to me than you think."

I dislike mystery and anything savouring of it. Moreover, the man's manner was insulting, as doubtless he intended it to be.

"My friend," I said, "I don't know your name, but I take you to be a spy, your own admission being such, and it seems to me you are rather reckless. All I have to do is to give an alarm, and you will be seized and hanged by the neck until you are dead, as the judges say."

"But you won't do that."

"Why?"

"I am the friend of the Seigneur and Mlle. de St. Maur. My arrest would put them in a most serious position, for I would immediately assert their

connivance in my visit here. You are not willing to have that happen, for you are in love with Mlle. de St. Maur."

I took thought a little. It is good to commune briefly with one's self sometimes.

"My friend," I said, "you charge me with being in love with Mlle. de St. Maur, and your tone in making the charge is that of a guardian or some such person. But a little while ago another man charged me with being in love with his daughter. To-morrow, I suppose, some third man will charge me with being in love with his step-sister or his maiden aunt. Am I supposed to fall in love with every woman I meet?"

"That's not my affair," he replied. "Only I advise you to keep away from Mlle. de St. Maur."

"What if I don't?" I replied. My anger at his tone and manner was rising in spite of me.

"This may help you," he replied.

Without a warning the scoundrel drew a pistol from his pocket and fired at me. Instinct made me dodge as his finger approached the trigger, and the bullet struck the arch, though it whizzed unpleasantly near me.

I drew my sword and slashed at him with all my might, for his treacherous attempt at murder was enough to infuriate even the meekest of human beings, and I did not claim to be such. But I only cut a gash in one of the bricks, for he had turned with great quickness, circled about, and sped up Water Street, which was but dimly lighted.

I ran after him, but he had the start of me, and,

moreover, proved to be a swifter runner than I. I saw in a moment that unless overtaken by some one else he would escape. I hesitated, and hesitating stopped. I had the de St. Maurs in mind. If he were captured, explanations would be necessary, and then he would probably keep his threats. After all, I had little complaint to make. His bullet had not touched me, and I did not see what particular harm he could do us in New York, spy about though he might both by night and by day.

I heard excited voices and the noise of approaching footsteps, attracted by the shot. I made up my mind in half a minute. I turned and ran back toward the Royal Exchange. Just as I reached the nearest arch I saw the burly form of Peter Vlieck. He had thrust his face far out, as if that would help him to look through the dusk, and I knew he was trying to find the cause of the shot. I rushed up to him and seized him with both hands.

"Thank Heaven, the bullet did not hit you!" I exclaimed. "What a lucky escape!"

He recognized me, but looked bewildered. "A lucky escape, you say! What do you mean?" he cried.

"Are you sure he did not hit you? Do you feel no wound?" I cried, kneading my hands into his shoulders and pudgy arms. "No," I continued, "I see no wound there. And at short range, too! What luck! The city could ill afford to spare such a man as you, Mynheer Vlieck."

I continued to feel for a wound, and Vlieck grew

alarmed. I discovered blood on his coat, and then I discovered that I was mistaken. But his alarm increased visibly.

"Have I been shot at? Has somebody been trying to kill me?" he gasped.

"An attempted assassination!" I cried in excited tones. "One of the boldest ever heard of, and right here, too, in the shadow of this palace devoted to commerce and peace. But it was like you, Mynheer Vlieck, to think little of yourself and seek the criminal even at the further risk of your life!"

He straightened up, and his chest swelled. Other people were arriving now.

"He stood here in the shadow of this arch," I continued, "and I saw his pistol levelled, but I could not warn you in time. He fired. I ran after him, but he escaped up Broad Street, and I returned, fearing that I would find you dead, and instead I find you seeking him everywhere."

The warlike old watchman's eyes flamed with pride. He looked around at the admiring crowd.

"I heard his bullet whizz," he said, "and I confess that for the moment I was startled. But I, too, pursued him, and I would have overtaken him had not my bulk unfortunately interfered with rapid pursuit."

"Are you sure that you are not wounded? Look again!" I asked anxiously.

Two or three of the crowd assisted in the examination, and then it was shown conclusively that the bullet had missed him. As the *Weekly Post Boy* said in its

next issue: "The darkness made the assassin's aim uncertain, and our brave and worthy watchman was spared for future usefulness. There is no doubt that the villain was one of the lawless camp followers whom our watchmen have had to repress with so strong a hand, and who wanted revenge."

I left the good Peter swelling and strutting, and surrounded by his admiring friends, and went home after the dry clothing and rest that I needed so badly.

I preserved absolute silence about the adventure at the Royal Exchange, even to Mlle. de St. Maur. I watched for the spy, but the days passed, and I saw no more of him.

A short while later I heard that the matter of the prisoners had been brought to a head at last, and that the de St. Maurs were about to depart, going by the way of Albany, and thence into the French lines. There was nothing against the seigneur, though he had been treated suspiciously, and our commander-in-chief had to let him go. I was present when they departed in their coach.

"Mademoiselle," I said, "I trust that you will not forget us when we come to Quebec."

"You will come only as prisoners," she said with a flash of French pride.

Culverhouse and I and some others of equal age gave them escort as far as Kingsbridge, for we owed all courtesy and protection to the strangers within our gates, even though they were of the enemy. When we

left them and waved them our final salutes, Culverhouse and I rode away together.

"A fine girl and a fine old man," said Culverhouse.

I was silent, but in silence I agreed with him.

We went back to camp, and the old idleness and dreary waiting. Thus a long time passed.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RESULT OF A TRIAL.

CULVERHOUSE and I were roused one morning from a state of dejection by Graham, who approached us with a bustling air that indicated important news, ripe for the telling. He gave us the gist of the matter at once. Mr. Pitt had become prime minister, and the King's forces in America would be roused from disgraceful slumber. Mr. Pitt's name was guarantee of that.

Graham surmised also that Loudoun had let slip his opportunities, that his day in America was done. This we found to be a very safe conclusion, for it was soon known that he had been recalled, and when at last he departed he was unregretted by all save a few companions of his pleasures. Of his successor, General Abercrombie, many had high hopes.

When these changes had been made, there was no longer any doubt that we would start soon for the north. In the bustle of preparation I met Marion in the city. I told her that we would march in three days. She wished me luck, and that I might come back a general, and we parted like brother and sister. Marion was a good girl, and had little of her father's

sour nature. As in duty bound, I paid my farewell respects to Mr. Arthur also. In the quarrels that had arisen between the English and the Americans, during Loudoun's occupation, he had become more English than ever, and there was no improvement in the feeling which we held toward each other. He was very chilly, and trusted that I would not forget my duty to my King. I responded that I would not, nor would I forget my duty to my colony either. My tone indicated that, while I mentioned the colony last, I considered it first. He understood it so, and turned abruptly to his desk, resuming some writing upon which he had been engaged when I entered. So I left him. After many mighty heaves and false starts, the army put itself in motion at last, and in time we reached Albany, upon which we fell like a plague, though, to tell the truth, a part of our forces had been there a long time already, and the Dutchmen had grown somewhat accustomed to them, just as we can learn to bear almost any evil.

I knew many people in Albany, and there was ample opportunity to renew old acquaintances. But I heard at once of a matter that amazed and concerned me greatly. The seigneur and his daughter had gone no further than Albany—in fact, were held there on a charge of conniving with a French spy who had been taken in the city, but had escaped a day later. I leaped at once to the conclusion that this spy was the mean-looking fellow whom Louise and I had seen in the city, but I was convinced as firmly as ever that

neither she nor her father had any part in his actions.

My first purpose was to see the seigneur and his daughter as soon as possible. I learned that they were kept in a kind of easy captivity at the house of one Philip Evertsen, a fur trader. I had sufficient influence to procure an order admitting me to their presence, and as soon as I could obtain leave I started to Evertsen's house, near the fort on the hill behind the town.

Albany interests me, and even then, with an anxious mind, I did not fail to look about at what was passing. Nearly all our great expeditions against the French and the Indians of Canada have been fitted out at Albany, and the Dutch people had grown so familiar with the presence of soldiery that they continued the pursuit of shillings and pence with unbroken calm.

I walked up the great street that ascended from the river to the fort, with its strips of grass and its busy life passing and repassing around the guardhouse, the town hall, and the churches. Verily these worthy Dutchmen could instruct our own New York merchants in some of the arts of trade. The Iroquois used to complain that the Dutch managed to get their furs from them for nothing, and there were many quarrels about it. I won't say that the Iroquois told falsehoods.

The evening was almost at hand, and the day's business was subsiding. The rows of curious Dutch houses on either side, all with their gable ends to the street, and each with its grassy yard, its well, its neatly cultivated garden and great shade trees, looked very

thrifty and comfortable. In the big front porch, of which each house had one, the women folks were gathering and talking from one house to another over the dividing fences.

The cows, which had been pasturing on the great common at the end of the town, walked calmly down the street as they returned home in the evening, their bells tinkling at their necks, caring nothing for the presence of the red-coated soldiers.

Every cow stopped in front of the door of its owner, and there it was milked, the children sitting on the steps, eager of eye, cup or porringer in hand, waiting for their share. Truly the Dutch, whatever may be their faults—and they may be much less than those of some other people—know how to live.

I heard the evening trumpets from the fort, and the twilight was at hand when I reached Evertsen's house. Two soldiers stood guard at the door, but my written order passed me in without trouble. By the Dutch handmaiden who received me I sent my compliments to the Seigneur de St. Maur and his daughter, and requested the honour of seeing them. I waited with eagerness in the little Dutch parlour, for it had been a long time now since I had seen Louise de St. Maur. She came alone, saying that her father was taking a walk with his friendly jailer, Mr. Evertsen. She was as beautiful as ever, more so to me, and when she gave me her hand she smiled so warmly that I knew she looked upon me as a good friend in a hostile land. I told her of those whom she had known in

New York, and then I asked about the detention of her father and herself in Albany. I felt that I knew her well enough to put such a question.

"It was by order of General Abercrombie," she said. "You will recall the man whom we saw in New York the day of the excursion and the storm. He was a Frenchman—a spy, as you have perhaps guessed. I knew him, but neither I nor my father had before known anything of his presence there. He was taken here, and escaped the next day, but he remained in captivity long enough to say that he knew us. Since then suspicion has been directed against us, and General Abercrombie has refused to pass us through his lines to our own people. He says he will dispose of us after he has disposed of Montcalm." Then she added, with a sparkle of patriotic fire: "A great army is gathered here, and they talk of beating the French as if it were already done. The English do not seem to learn from experience."

"But the French can scarce expect to beat such an army as we have now," I said.

The seigneur returned presently with Evertsen, and I found him as proud and as great a figure as ever, but his welcome to me was most gratifying. He made an amendment to his daughter's statement that his case was not to be disposed of until after the campaign, as he had just received a message to appear before General Abercrombie on the following day.

I bade them adieu, much moved by the injustice of Abercrombie toward them, and resolved to assist them

if I could find a way, though I was aware that any testimony I might give would be to their prejudice instead of their favour, since I was the only positive witness that Mlle. de St. Maur had known of the spy's presence in New York, and that she had seen him there.

Nevertheless, I resolved to be present at the examination of the seigneur, and I set about the task of managing it, which was not so difficult as it might have seemed. I discovered that General Abercrombie, Lord Howe, who was second in command, and some other distinguished officers were temporary guests at the house of Mrs. Schuyler, in the meadows beyond the town, the same Mrs. Schuyler who was the aunt of our General Schuyler of the Revolution, and a very fine woman, too, as everybody said who knew her.

Through my acquaintance with Mrs. Schuyler, and some social influence which I was able to exert indirectly, I procured an invitation to take luncheon with other officers at her house the next day. With the lax methods of discipline—or rather indiscipline, if I may coin such a word—prevailing among us, I thought by the use of a fair degree of wit I could prolong my stay there throughout the afternoon.

Upon arrival at Mrs. Schuyler's at the appointed hour on the following day, I was introduced to General Abercrombie, whom I had seen before, but had never met. We had hoped much of him, and there had been great talk of his valour, skill, and force of mind, but the sight of him was never encouraging to me. He

was heavy of both body and countenance. His face was puffed and inflamed with rich food and drink, and he had the droop of an old man, though he was but a year or two past fifty. It was said in Albany, so I soon heard, that he was perhaps a trifle less frivolous than Loudoun, but a better hand at the table.

"So you are coming with us to learn how war should be made," he said to me, with the lofty condescension becoming a British general to a colonial subaltern.

I said that I was, and humbly trusted that I would have some small part in the great events to come.

"You provincials may do well enough as scouts, guides, skirmishers, and that sort of thing," he said, "but when the heavy work comes, I think that we will have to trust to the British bayonet."

He took a pinch of snuff and looked critically at me.

I felt like telling him that it was bad policy to say such things to the provincials, who formed at least half his army. Even I, a subaltern, knew the folly of talk like that. But then the British were in the habit of saying them, although all the facts were against them, and they did not seem to care for the result.

"I think, general, that the lieutenant will be as sure to do his duty as if he were born and bred a Briton," said a young man, stepping forward from a corner of the room, where I had not noticed him before.

His interposition in my behalf caused me to look at him with great interest, and my interest was increased by his frank manners, his fine, open face, the kindliness

of his eye, and his youth—he was only a year or two past thirty.

It was my first meeting with Lord Howe, the one British general in that war who understood both English and Americans, was loved by both, and who knew how to make use of both. How different things would have been years later had all the British officers then been such as he!

General Abercrombie did not seem to resent Lord Howe's interference. In fact, he let the earl have his way in military matters, which was the one piece of good sense that he showed. I heard afterward that Pitt intended Howe to be the real moving spirit of the campaign, prompting and directing the sluggish Abercrombie.

Abercrombie sauntered off to make gallant speeches to some of the ladies who were present, and Lord Howe, drawing me to a window, where we were a little apart from the others, began to question me about the troops who had arrived from New York, the feeling among the men and officers of my rank, their condition, and what they expected from the campaign. He showed so much understanding, and his manner was so sympathetic and so kind, that I was moved to make an appeal to him in behalf of the seigneur and his daughter. Though I omitted the meeting with the spy in New York, I told him I knew the de St. Maurs well, and was confident the seigneur had not sought to abuse his mission into our colony and use it for any covert purposes.

He listened to me very attentively. "You take much interest in them, do you not?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied.

"In which do you take the greater interest, the seigneur or his daughter?"

I was a trifle confused, but, as I saw a twinkle in his eye, I knew there was no necessity for an answer. Then he added—

"This matter is to be disposed of by the general this afternoon before the council of the officers is held. It does not seem to me that there is proof upon which we can continue to hold the seigneur in violation of his safe conduct, though, of course, you will not quote me as saying so, as General Abercrombie is in supreme command here."

There was a great party at luncheon, mostly British, however. General Abercrombie found the wine good, and showed his appreciation of it in large measure, whereupon he grew very mellow, and, when the gentlemen were alone in the parlour afterward, told stories which it were better not to repeat. After a little of this, which went a long way, Lord Howe whispered something to him, and he announced with pompous gravity that the time for wit and humour had passed, and we must now dispose of a serious matter. I was by far the lowest in rank then in the room, but General Abercrombie made no objection to my presence. I suppose Lord Howe had prepared that for me. Then he dispatched a messenger for the seigneur, who came speedily, escorted by two soldiers.

The soldiers stopped at the drawing-room door, and the seigneur entered, walking directly toward General Abercrombie. He was the old lion all over, haughty and fierce, and looking much more fit to try the general than the general was to try him. Lord Howe courteously invited him to take a seat. He declined at first, but when the earl insisted he accepted. He took no note of me, but he must have seen me.

General Abercrombie was yet mellow with his wine, otherwise I doubt whether even he would have held this little court in such an informal manner. He stated in a rambling way that the Seigneur Raymond de St. Maur was accused of conniving with one Jean Leloir, a French spy, who had been taken and escaped, but who before escaping had said he was a friend of the seigneur, then within the English lines on a mission connected with exchange of prisoners.

The seigneur, in a manner of the utmost coldness and haughtiness, said he knew no one named Jean Leloir, nor any spy of any name whatever; whereupon I assumed that the spy had given a false name, and that Mlle. Louise had never told her father about the meeting. At the end of his denial the seigneur said that he made the statement voluntarily, that he did not recognize the right of the English commander-in-chief to detain him or to question him, inasmuch as he was within the lines by agreement of the hostile forces, and on an errand recognized by the military laws of all civilized nations.

General Abercrombie flushed very red at the stinging,

and I think deserved reproach, and would have made some insulting answer, but his good mentor, Lord Howe, was at his elbow, and restrained him. Instead, he asked him some questions about his movements at New York and Albany, to all of which the seigneur returned such prompt and clear answers that it was obvious to every mind present, not muddled, that he could have had no connection with the spy.

General Abercrombie seemed to be disappointed. Lord Howe whispered to him, but he shook his head, and this time seemed bent upon having his way. He ordered that the seigneur be taken into an adjoining room and be kept there for the present. The seigneur retired, his expression half-amusement, half-contempt.

"There is a lady, M. de St. Maur's daughter, who is concerned in this case," said General Abercrombie. "We must have her testimony also.—Lord Howe, will you send for her at once?"

The earl immediately turned to me and asked me to bring Mlle. de St. Maur. I was grateful to him for having chosen me, which I knew he had done from deliberation, but it was not a time or place to thank him, and, as soon as I received the written order to the sentinel at the Evertsen house, I hurried away.

I found mademoiselle somewhat anxious over the result of the examination. I told her that her turn had come now, and bade her to be of courage, as we had a powerful friend in Lord Howe. But my attempt to animate her was not needed. She said with great

spirit that if the English expected to win campaigns by such methods, it did not become a Frenchman or a Frenchwoman to seek to prevent them. I perceived that she was a true daughter of France, and I was quite confident that she would be able to hold her own in the presence of Abercrombie and all the others.

We attracted attention as we walked through the streets, which contained much soldiery, including some officers, but, with mademoiselle upon my arm, I passed them all, ignoring their looks. I escorted mademoiselle directly to the drawing-room where General Abercrombie and the others awaited her. Lord Howe was standing at a window, but he turned about the moment we entered, and I saw a look of admiration upon his face. He hastened forward to escort Mlle. de St. Maur to a chair, and was of such exceeding courtesy that my liking for him, already strong, increased much.

Most of the officers had withdrawn, but all present rose when she entered, except General Abercrombie. I supposed that he had forgotten the courtesy because he had partaken so freely of the good wine. I gave him that much credit. He was sitting in a great cushioned chair, with his face partly turned away from us, and did not seem to think it worth while to turn about when we entered.

Lord Howe, with the same decision and kindliness, for which I again thanked him, took the matter in hand. He explained, with the greatest courtesy, that Mlle. de St. Maur and her father were suspected of

complicity with a French spy, named Leloir, and General Abercrombie was compelled to ask her some questions.

"Very well," said Louise, with quite a haughty air. "Ask them."

Lord Howe bent over General Abercrombie's chair a moment, and then said—

"The general wishes to ask you, Mlle. de St. Maur, if you know this man Jean Leloïr?"

"I do not know any Jean Leloir, nor had I ever heard the name until this charge was made against us," she replied.

General Abercrombie seemed satisfied, but the earl whispered to him a moment. Then he said—

"Your father has never spoken to you of knowing any one in Canada named Leloir?"

"No."

"No Frenchman in disguise has ever communicated with you or your father either in New York or Albany?"

"No."

"So far as you know, your father has confined himself strictly to his legitimate errand—the exchange of prisoners?"

"Yes."

All this was the strict truth.

The earl whispered to the general again. I was devoutly thankful to him for prompting General Abercrombie so successfully.

"The general is satisfied with your replies and those

of your father," said the earl "He believes they are the truth, and regrets that the matter should have hung on so long and discommoded you so much."

"I thank you and him, my lord," said Mlle. Louise.

"He asks me to say to you," continued the earl, "that your safe conduct will be renewed at once, and you will be passed as soon as you wish within the French lines."

"I thank you again, my lord," said Louise, with a bright smile.

"Lieutenant Charteris," said the earl, turning to me, "you will assist in carrying out General Abercrombie's wishes and orders by escorting Mlle. de St. Maur and her father to their quarters. See that they receive every attention in Mr. Evertsen's power."

I rose to cross the room and carry out my orders, and in doing so I obtained a full view of General Abercrombie's face, and perceived that he was sleeping soundly. Even as we passed through the door in search of the seigneur his snore rose upon the peaceful air and permeated the apartment.

Just how the earl broke the news of the verdict to the general I never knew, for Abercrombie always kept silent about the matter, as I am sure I, too, would have done had I been in his place.

When I had escorted the seigneur and his daughter to Mr. Evertsen's house, I returned to Mrs. Schuyler's to get further orders from the earl. But when I entered the hall I saw a round dozen of our American colonels gathered there, all red with wrath, and some swearing

with vigour and profusion. I knew one of them, Edgerton, of Connecticut, and I felt privileged to ask him what the trouble might be.

"You know the old claim of the British officers," he said, "that rank in the provincial armies amounts to nothing as compared with theirs. An order has just arrived from London directing that a provincial colonel shall never outrank a captain of British regulars. We've come to the general's council, but we're denied admission, as at best we're only equal to captains in rank."

I left, wondering at this latest proof of British tact. As an officer of the Royal Americans, my commission came from the King, and I was in his pay, but my sympathies were all for my countrymen. Mine truly was a sword of two and rival camps, and I was catching the dust of both.

CHAPTER X.

A MORNING SURPRISE.

The seigneur and Louise were sent under escort the next day to Lake George, and we heard a little later from our scouts that they had reached the French lines in safety. One of these scouts was Zebedee Crane, who soon became the very good friend of both Culverhouse and myself.

While the army was marching to Lake George, we joined Zebedee in one of his scouting expeditions, and on a bright morning in early summer saw a streak of silver shining through the trees.

"What is that, Zebedee?" asked Culverhouse.

"Cold water. You ought to know the sight of it, even if you are an English officer."

"Zebedee, if you were not so useful to us, I would resent that remark. I fear much that you will never be a good courtier!"

"What's a courtier, leftenant?"

"Never mind. But, at least, it's what you are not."

"All right, leftenant. Come to the top of this hill here, an' you can get a better view of the water. See

it a-shinin' like silver through them trees. That's the lake, and the dark line above it is the mountain on the other side. But the risin' sun will turn both lake and mountain to yellow gold pretty soon."

It was full daylight when Culverhouse, Zebedee Crane, and I, caught this first glimpse of the lake that we call George, but for which the Indians have a finer and more romantic name. The sun was peeping over the high mountains, and his first rays fell upon the lake, splashing drops of gold upon its silver bosom. The birds of the morning were singing with full throats. The mountains, save now and then a peak, which rose savage and naked as if scorning any adornment, were covered with the deep, rich, luxuriant green of an American forest in the fullness of summer. Set deep in the mountains, spread the sparkling lake. Wild flowers sprang up at our feet. In our faces blew the west wind, crisp and sweet with the odour of the woods.

"How pleasant is the breath of the green wood!" said Culverhouse, standing up and inhaling the breeze. "It makes me feel as if I would like to be a Robin Hood."

"Who's Robin Hood?" asked Zebedee, who was much given to curiosity.

"Robin Hood," replied Culverhouse, "was an estimable gentleman with tastes and habits to which yours, I suspect, are much akin, friend Zebedee."

"Then he must have been a mighty fine man," said Zebedee, with calm egotism.

Culverhouse laughed, and lay down in the deep, rich grass, luxuriating like a wild animal in the forest.

"It was worth coming across the sea to get a view like this and to feel like this," he said.

"But s'pose it was winter," said Zebedee, "an' it was a-hailin' an' a-snowin' an' it was sixty miles from the nearest settlement, an' you had no powder in your powder-horn an' no bullets in your bullet-pouch, how'd you like it then?"

"We will not contemplate such a combination of misfortunes, Zebedee," said Culverhouse. "I could lie in this grass and go to sleep feeling as if I were half-way to heaven."

"An' most likely you'd wake up all the way to heaven or t'other place," said Zebedee, "an' without your scalp, too. Don't you know these woods are full of Indians—Hurons and the like?"

"I suppose I do know it," said Culverhouse, lazily. "It has been told to me often enough, but I don't seem to realize it."

"That's what ails you English," said Zebedee. "If you thought more about Indians an' less about hoss parades an' beatin' drums, more of you might keep your scalps where they belong, on top of your heads."

Zebedee, who was sitting on a fallen log, with his long rifle resting on his knees, spoke very earnestly, and Culverhouse felt the reproof, for he said—

"It must be confessed, Zebedee, that your remarks are true. We have not yet proved ourselves to be adepts at this sort of warfare. But we can learn."

"It's time to set about it," said Zebedee, tersely.

No one could ever accuse Zebedee of shuffling or evasive speech.

"Perhaps an Indian concealed somewhere in the undergrowth is regarding us now," I said.

"It is not impossible," replied Zebedee.

"A cheerful thought!" said Culverhouse.

"You should have thought of that before we asked permission to come ahead of the army on this scouting expedition," I said. "We are within the enemy's lines, are we not, Zebedee?"

"I don't know much about lines," replied the boy, "but we are within his reach. Across yonder, toward Champlain, is Ticonderoga, that we're comin' with such a power of men an' bayonets an' drums to take."

"And we will take it too, Zebedee," said Culverhouse. "Don't be a prophet of evil."

Zebedee did not reply, but, shading his eyes with his hand from the brilliant sunshine, gazed long in the direction in which we knew the kernel of the French force lay. Then he turned his eyes down toward the lake, and presently he said—

"There's a canoe across yonder under the bank of the hill."

"Indians in it?"

"Indians or French, or more likely both," he said.

He pointed out the distant object keeping so carefully within the shadow of the cliff that without Zebedee neither Culverhouse nor I would ever have seen it. It was moving up the lake, but remained so close to

the wall of rock that we could not distinguish its occupants.

"That means somethin', I guess," said Zebedee. "The French know our army is comin', an' Montcalm don't sleep twenty-four hours a day. When we go a-scoutin' we ought to go a-scoutin', an' we'd better find out what that canoe means. I'll take one of you an' go further up the lake, while the other can stay here an' watch from this p'int."

"All right," said Culverhouse, "I'll go with you. I don't like waiting."

"I don't like waiting either," I said. "I'll go with Zebedee."

"Toss up a shillin'," said Zebedee, "an' settle it atween you."

It was curious how this lank, half-wild boy asserted rulership over us when we were in the wilderness; but his domain was the woods. Obediently we tossed up the shilling, and it fell to the lot of Culverhouse to go and to mine to stay.

"Now, lay close," said Zebedee to me, with an air of authority, "an' don't make any noise. Be sure an' don't let your rifle or your pistol off."

I promised faithfully to heed his directions, and then, after an equally sharp injunction to Culverhouse "to walk lighter than a cat," they disappeared in the green underbrush, leaving me alone on the hill.

I watched the canoe for some time. Then it curved around a peninsula of rock and disappeared, and there was nothing left for me to watch—at least, nothing that

moved—except the waves of the lake. But I felt no temptation to violate Zebedee's command and move about or make a noise.

I was lying in the long grass, which rose above me. I did not believe that any one more than ten feet away could discern my figure, even if he had eyes of preternatural acuteness. Before coming on the scout, Culverhouse and I, obedient to Zebedee's advice, had discarded our officers' coats and were arrayed in green hunting shirts, which blended with the colours of the forest. Instead of our swords, we carried rifles. Mine lay beside me within convenient reach of my hand.

I was alone in the wilderness, but I felt no fear. Though I knew the hostile Hurons and their equally cunning allies the French were lurking through all these forests, I was like Culverhouse, I could not realize the danger. Why should I, when there was nothing around me but the whispering silence and the blaze of green forest and golden sunshine? I laughed to myself at the idea of danger, and rolled my body into an easier position on the soft turf. I gazed sleepily out at the lake, where the waves, tossed up by the west wind, pursued each other briskly across its glistening surface until they crumbled away and sank back into the lake. A little brown bird dropped lightly upon a bough over my head and poured out a flood of song.

It was all so gentle and so soothing that my mind turned naturally to reflection, to all the incidents of our advance since we had departed from New York,

to those whom we had left there, and then to Louise de St. Maur.

These thoughts were agreeable, and conduced to rest. I was tired and drowsy, too. We had been travelling through the forest nearly all the night before, for Zebedee said that when the Hurons were abroad it was safer to scout after the sun had gone down. Zebedee and Culverhouse were gone very long, and I half-closed my eyes as I listened to the bird's slumber song.

A hare hopped through the grass near me. I was so quiet that he stood up for a moment and looked at me with fearless eyes. Then he hopped calmly away. A squirrel ran up a tree, saucily curving his bushy grey tail over his back as he dashed toward the highest bough. Some green lizards crawled along the side of a fallen tree trunk. A sharp grey nose thrust itself up from the grass twenty or thirty feet away. I looked a second time at the grey nose, and then saw the lank body behind it. A grey wolf! They were common in these woods. I would have drawn my pistol and fired at the animal merely for sport's sake, but it would be insanity to risk a shot within the shadow of the enemy's defences.

I drew my hand away from the pistol-butt toward which I had moved it unconsciously, and regarded the wolf. He was a bold fellow. All but his head was now concealed in the grass, but he gazed at me with glowing red eyes.

"You would probably like to make a meal of me, my fine fellow," I thought, "but I am not for you."

I picked up a broken stick and threw it at the animal. The missile fell short, but the sharp nose and the glowing red eyes disappeared in the denser undergrowth, and I was left to my musings.

I looked out again at the lake, but saw only the crumbling waves that still pursued each other over its surface. I wondered why Zeb and Culverhouse stayed so long. I had not supposed they would go far in such a place as this. But as there was no answer to these unspoken inquiries, I sleepily allowed my eyes to close. But I opened them again when I heard the fluff of something moving through the grass.

There was the wolf again! He had moved around to the right of me, but he was a little nearer, and his grey nose looked sharper and his eyes redder than before. It was a persistent and evidently an inquisitive brute.

Perhaps it wanted to make friends with me! I snapped my fingers in the manner of a man calling a dog. The brute cocked his head on one side and came a little closer, though his body remained concealed in the thick undergrowth. Wondering at his tameness, I snapped my fingers again, but the wolf would come no nearer I repeated my invitation several times, but without effect, and then, tiring of the business, I again threw a piece of fallen wood at him. He disappeared a second time with marvellous quickness. Perhaps if I were such an attraction for animals, the bears and panthers, which prowled through these woods, would also be coming to see me. The thought amused me

for a moment, and then I turned my attention again to the lake, where I was to watch for whatsoever I might see.

Five minutes passed, and I heard behind me the noise of something brushing through the grass. I whirled over and found the wolf's grey nose and glowing eyes thrust almost in my face. Startled, I was about to spring back, but at that moment the shape of a wolf dropped away, and as the empty hide fell to the ground an Indian warrior in all the glory and hideousness of his war-paint sprang to his feet. He uttered no sound, not even the customary war whoop, but his glowing eyes expressed his triumph.

My pistol was in my belt scarcely a foot from my hand, but I made no motion to reach it. The terrible surprise and the triumphant gaze of the Indian numbed me. The power of action slipped away from me like breath from the dying. I could do nothing but lie there and return the gaze of the triumphant warrior.

Even in that moment, with my will enchained and expecting death, I was curiously observant. I noted every feature of the Indian's face, and I shall never forget them, though I live to be as old as Adam, and all the years be crowded with events. I observed the knife also, and saw that it was of French make—no doubt one of the rewards that Montcalm gave to his savage allies.

All this passed in the falling of an eyelid. Then my eyes closed, and I passively awaited the stroke.

I heard the report of a rifle, sounding at this terrific moment like the roar of a cannon in my ears. A heavy form crushed down upon me. Warm blood spurted upon my face, and for the moment I became dizzy and half-unconscious.

CHAPTER XI.

A FLIGHT AND A FIGHT.

"He is dead, Zebedee! Look, he is covered with blood! We were too late!"

"Dead nothin'! Drag him up an' give him a good shake! Hurry! we've got to be quick!"

Culverhouse's strong hand was in the collar of my hunting shirt. He jerked me to a sitting posture, and shook me so violently that he shook all the dizziness out of me.

"Grab your gun," said Zebedee, "an' come on! We was just in time then, an' we've got to run for it yet."

The boy was rapidly reloading his rifle as he spoke, and I dimly comprehended what had happened. The dead Indian lying at my feet, with a clean round hole in his temple, was sufficient explanation. I seized my rifle, and, shuddering as I took a last look at the fallen warrior, darted away to the south, close behind Zebedee and Culverhouse.

"You have him to thank for not being in the Indian's place," said Culverhouse, between panting breaths, and nodding at Zebedee. "It was one of the neatest shots I ever saw, and at long range, too."

Then he asked Zeb what he meant to do. The boy made no reply. Culverhouse repeated the question.

"Shut up!" said Zeb. "This ain't no time to bother me with questions."

"You must not talk to me in that manner," said Culverhouse, with some choler. "I am an officer, and I am older than you."

"Shut up, I tell you!" repeated Zeb, emphatically. "Just now I'm more'n a hundred years older than you are."

Culverhouse asked no more questions.

When we had run about a half-mile, we stopped for a moment on the crest of a little hill. Then we heard a cry, shrill and rising higher and higher, until its piercing note seemed to fill the wilderness. Then it sank down in a long, throbbing quaver. The cry expressed triumph and anger, and was of such uncanny tone that I could not repress a shiver.

"Good God!" exclaimed Culverhouse. "What, in the name of all that's merciful, was that?"

"That," said Zebedee, "is the war whoop of the Hurons, an' that's what we want to get away from as fast as we can, for if we don't our hair will be a public ornament afore nightfall. You came to the war, leftenant, an' you find it a-meetin' you."

"And this is war," muttered Culverhouse, "taking to our heels through the woods as if we were pursued by the prince of the fiends himself!"

"You've sized it up tol'ably well, leftenant," said Zeb. "It's war, sure, an' it's a kind of war that's been

goin' ag'in us from the start. It might be a good thing to recollect that. Now let's be off ag'in."

We resumed our flight. After the single whoop, we heard nothing behind us. But the silence was more terrifying than any amount of noise would have been. The wind seemed to have died away. There was no movement among the green young leaves and the tender grass. The sky was a sheet of blue, and the sun, a great globe of gold, sailed up toward the zenith. It was just a brilliant summer morning, and there was no hostile sound, nowhere a sign of an enemy. But we could hear the thump of our own hearts, and the strained breath rasping the throat as it was drawn up from the tired lungs.

My first feeling was akin to shame. It was the same that Culverhouse had expressed in his short remark. This was a pretty beginning for a young officer who had seen the gold epaulets of a general shining at the end of his career. To be chased headlong through the forest by prowling savages, and to yield the leadership perforce to a lank boy who did not know a dragoon from a drum major!

We ran on for a long time. Zebedee kept slightly in front. I could not help noticing his long, easy stride, and the wary manner in which he swept the forest with his eyes. In the wilds and with danger near the boy had expanded, and there was a new look on his face. The dull, vacant expression, such as those of feeble mind wear, had disappeared. His countenance was instinct with intelligence. Every feature

expressed alertness, keenness, and a fitness for the part he assumed, or rather which fell upon him like a garment that had been made for him. Here the boy had become our master.

We paused again by a little brook that whispered a song as it threw coils of silver over the pebbles.

"I suggest that we go no further," said Culverhouse, as he gasped for breath. "It is not becoming to an officer in his Majesty's service to fly thus from any danger at all, far less from a danger that he cannot see, and that he does not even know to exist."

"The danger's real enough, I tell you," said Zebedee. "Them woods behind you are swarmin' with the Hurons, an' they mean to have us. They heard my shot, an' they saw the dead warrior. Didn't you hear the yell? They'll follow us now clean into the lines of our own army if they don't get us afore then."

"I suppose it's as you say," said Culverhouse. "I'm willing to admit that I do not know much about this manner of making war."

"It's no choice of yours," said Zeb. "They make it for you. We'll rest here a little, an' then we'll run ag'in."

Culverhouse looked at me and burst into a great laugh.

"What ails you?" I asked in amazement. "I can see nothing to laugh at."

"Certainly not," he replied, "but you could if you had a mirror. I was merely thinking how lucky it was for you that no sweetheart of yours could see you now."

"He ain't the prettiest thing in the world, that's certain," said Zebedee, grinning. "The blood of the Indian that fell across you, Leftenant Charteris, has run all over your face and dried there, till you're as ringed an' streaked an' striped as if you was a born curiosity as ugly as tarnation."

"Here's water. I'll wash it," I said.

"No," said Zeb, authoritatively. "Let it go. You're not pretty, but you're pretty enough for the business we've got on hand. Do you feel a little fresher now?"

We answered in the affirmative, and, Zeb leading, we began our flight again. We had run perhaps half a mile, when the sound of a rifle-shot reached us. I heard a singing past my ear, and involuntarily I threw my head to one side. I have heard that hiss often since. That was the first time it ever whispered in my ear, but I knew it well even then. It marked the passage of a bullet.

"They're close behind us," said Zebedee, "but they fired sooner than I expected. That was a long-range shot. Boys, we must make a rush, or they'll pick us off."

I cast a look behind me, and saw nothing but one little curl of smoke rising above the trees. But there was no longer any doubt about the pursuit. The whistle of the bullet was sufficient proof. And it seemed somehow to give us renewed strength. Zeb chuckled dryly at our increased speed. Presently we heard the war whoop again; but this time it was not

from one voice, but from a dozen. Back among the trees we could see the forms of our pursuers.

"I cannot endure this any longer, Zebedee," gasped Culverhouse. "Breath and strength are leaving me. You and Charteris go on, and I'll make the best stand I can, and die as becomes a King's officer."

Culverhouse's words were brave, and I doubt not that he meant them, or rather tried to mean them, but his eyes expressed the hope that we would not desert him. No man is so brave that he is willing to be abandoned in the face of death. Nor did we take him at his word.

"Come on to the top of the hill there, an' we'll make a fight of it together. That's the place for us," said Zebedee.

And so it was. I had enough of a military eye to see it at a glance.

Upon a small hill a great number of large trees had been blown down by a tornado. They had fallen in such a manner that some of the trunks lay across each other, while the vegetation grew between. It was a kind of natural fortification, and the sight cheered us greatly.

Culverhouse and I gathered up our remaining strength and made a dash for the logs. Zebedee, instead of leading, now brought up the rear. When we were within a yard or two of the fallen trees, he whirled about, threw his rifle to his shoulder, and pulled the trigger. As the stream of fire leaped from the long barrel it was accompanied by a piercing cry,

and I knew that one of our pursuers would pursue no more. Then all together we leaped over the timber and flung ourselves panting upon the ground, the rifle bullets of our pursuers pattering upon the logs.

Before the reports of their rifles had ceased to ring in our ears, the wary Zebedee was on his knees examining our quarters.

"Lay close, boys," he said, "an' none of their bullets can touch you. Peep through that crack there, an' you can see how many Indians are after you."

Culverhouse and I looked, as we had been told, and, much to our astonishment, saw nothing—that is, nothing living. There was the forest, green and placid, the brilliant beams of the sun penetrating the foliage of the trees and lingering lovingly on the grass. It seemed to be a primeval wilderness into which we, and we alone, had come.

"These red enemies of ours have most surprising methods," ejaculated Culverhouse. "Will you kindly tell me, friend Zebedee, what has become of them?"

"I guess the earth has just opened an' swallered 'em up," said Zebedee; "but if you was to poke your head above that log, I'll bet a half-dozen bullets would come a-huntin' it. You can bet, leftenant, that they're a-waitin' for your scalp."

"What queer people these red fellows are!" said Culverhouse again, meditatively, "and how they violate all the rules of war!"

"But they win battles mighty often, in spite of the rules," interrupted Zebedee.

"And what a sanguinary desire they evince to obtain our scalps!" continued Culverhouse.

He felt for his hair, which was very abundant, and then said ruefully to me—

"To think I should be threatened with such a fate, I, who have danced with a princess of the blood royal!"

Zeb burst into a fit of derisive laughter. "Do you think the Hurons will care for your princess of the blood royal, leftenant?" he asked. "But, lordy me, the Hurons know somethin' 'bout teachin' people to dance themselves. They'll know how to make you hop, skip, an' jump, leftenant."

"Zebedee, my friend," said Culverhouse, sorrowfully, "it seems to me that you are trying to play upon my fears with these suggestions of the red men's deviltry. It is very unkind of you, Zebedee."

"All right, leftenant," said Zebedee cheerfully. "We'll drop it. I guess we both had better be watchin' the Hurons."

The windrow had been a great piece of luck for us. The surrounding space for some yards in every direction was almost bare of trees. We could sweep the intervening territory with our rifles, and if our enemies attempted to take us with a rush, it would be a most dangerous thing for them.

"They won't try the rush; at least, not yet," said Zeb. "Much as they love scalps, they like to get 'em without riskin' their own. They'd rather wait. I think we're in for a long spell of it. Have you got anything to propose, leftenant?"

"Zebedee," said Culverhouse, with a fine air of resignation, "I am an officer in the army; so is my friend here. You, as far as we know, are not an officer in anything. Nevertheless, we resign this affair into your hands. I disclaim any responsibility whatsoever for our situation and for what may happen. This is not correct in any particular. It is contrary to all the rules of warfare as I have learned them in the best and most polished schools of the world. I can express only my disgust at such an un-English way of making war, and my deep regret at being concerned in it. The thought of the many apologies that I will have to make to my fellow-officers is most unpleasant, and vexes my spirit sorely."

"How very English you are!" I said. "You would then have the Hurons to fight according to your methods?"

"Of a certainty," he said with emphasis. "It is the only proper way. The Hurons can never hope to obtain my approval if they persist in their irregularities."

Here Culverhouse settled himself back against the logs as if he felt great relief at having got a burden off his mind, and intended to have nothing more to do with the affair. I cast a look at Zebedee to see how he took this enunciation of the military law, but that young worthy was staring between the logs at the forest, and apparently did not hear. As for myself, I concluded it was better not to reply.

For a long time none of us spoke. We contented

ourselves with watching. It was now noonday, for the sun had sailed up to the zenith and hung directly over our heads. Poised in the centre of the heavens, he poured his shining arrows upon us, and we could see the heat quivering in the air. Nor was it permitted us to escape it. We tried to crouch under the fallen trees, but the sun's rays sought us there, and drew the sweat every time they struck us.

"It is a most uncomfortable day to stand a siege," said Culverhouse.

"You mean it's tarnal hot," said Zeb.

"It comes to the same thing," replied Culverhouse, "though your expression may be more direct and forcible."

"What is going to be the end of all this?" asked Culverhouse, after another long pause.

"Maybe our scalps will hang on a lodge pole," said Zeb, deliberately, "an' maybe they won't. They won't if the troops, who ought to come, get here in time. As nigh as I can calculate, this place is right on the line of march of our army. We ain't very far ahead, an' p'r'aps some of 'em will come up an' help us out. Leastways that might be the case if the army had any more scoutin' parties out now."

"If they come, I hope they won't be long about it," said Culverhouse. "By my faith, this position is getting to be a trifle uncomfortable! Zebedee, are you still of a mind that our enemies are in concealment there, watching us?"

"If you don't think it," said Zebedee, "lift your hat

a bit above the highest log. The trick ain't new, an' maybe they'll let it pass. But still they're so anxious for a shot that I guess some of 'em will plunk away at it."

"The suggestion seems to be well made, and I think I will try it," said Culverhouse.

He began cautiously and slowly to lift his head. The top of his hat was just beginning to appear above the improvised fortification when Zeb seized him with both hands and dragged him down.

"Don't be so pesky fast, leftenant," he said. "I said raise the hat, but you needn't raise it with your head in it."

"By Jove, you are right," said Culverhouse, in some confusion. "I am glad you brought me to with a jerk. It would have been decidedly irregular, not to mention the matter of danger."

"Which last ain't the least by any manner of means," said Zeb. Then, without more ado, he reached over, seized Culverhouse's befrogged hat, and lifted it off his head.

"I guess I'd better do this," he said. "I 'pear to have more of a sleight at these things than you do, leftenant. You might beat me out in the open, where things are reg'lar, but here in the woods I'm a lettle bit heftier."

He put the hat on the end of the ramrod of his gun, and began to hoist it, though with much slowness.

"It may sp'il the hat, leftenant," said Zebedee, "but it's for the sake of a good cause."

"And I paid three guineas for it out of my own purse," said Culverhouse, sorrowfully. "If there is anything about my habit that has been a particular joy to me, it has been my hat."

The hat rose above the log, a bit of the feathers and gold braid appearing first. Then a little of the crown was hoisted into view, and the next moment the report of a firearm was heard from a point in the woods toward the north-west.

Zeb lowered the hat and handed it to Culverhouse, saying—

"Leftenant, I thank you for the loan of your fine hat, an' I give it back to you with extrys added to it."

There was a neat round hole in either side, where the Indian bullet had gone through. Culverhouse clapped the hat back on his head.

"Your assertions about the Indians are true, Zebedee," he said, "and the fact needs no further verification at the expense of my *chapeau*."

The incident made it very evident that our enemies would not relax their vigilance. In fear of an attack or some of the dangerous devices to which these crafty savages are addicted, we watched the woods on all sides.

"I think I begin to have a tincture of the battle fever," said Culverhouse, presently. "Is there no way in which I can lodge a shot in the vitals of one of those crapulous savages?"

"It is irregular," I said. "The military treatises do not provide for any such feats."

"I am willing now to overlook the irregularity," said

Culverhouse, "as we have happened upon circumstances of such queerness."

"The chance may be yours soon," said Zeb. "If you see an Indian, shoot at him, but look out for your own head. Don't poke it out too far."

Culverhouse and I at least had little stomach for such inaction, and we were beset with impatience. I was just opening my mouth to make complaint when the words were cut off at my lips by a volley of rifle shots. We heard some of the bullets whizzing over our heads and others burying themselves with a nasty spat! spat! in the tree trunks.

"From what point are they firing?" asked Culverhouse, who was fingering his rifle and showing much desire to return the fire.

"From all p'ints," replied Zeb. "They've made a ring 'round us, an' are all firin' at us in the centre in hopes that we can't dodge all their bullets."

"Nor can we," said I, as I felt a sting in my left arm.

I pulled up the sleeve in much haste, but the bullet had only burned the flesh. It was like the sting of a bee to an ox, and aroused in me a great desire to return the courtesy with all the interest that should be added by a gentleman. I peeped through the tree trunks in an effort to catch sight of our hitherto invisible foe. At that moment a rifle flashed beside me, and Culverhouse uttered a cry of joy.

"I verily believe I hit him, the dancing demon!" he exclaimed. "I saw him skipping from one tree to another."

"An' I know I hit mine," said Zebedee, who had fired a moment later, "for I saw his body pitch over in the bushes, an' it's a-layin' there yet."

I also got a shot, but I am confident I missed.

And I have always held to it that Culverhouse missed too, for he was a poor marksman, which was not to be wondered at, his experience with the rifle being but small.

Then the shots ceased, and silence again possessed the woods.

"They made a mess of it that time," said Zebedee, "an' lost a good warrior. They risked too much, an' showed themselves when they should a-laid hid and plunked away at us. Then in time they might have killed all of us without any of 'em gettin' hurt."

"Then I trust, Zeb, they will not think of it yet!" I exclaimed.

There was a long pause, in which we did nothing but blister under the blazing sun and reflect upon the pressing inconvenience of our situation. I, at least, did the latter, and wondered over and over again if all the fine ambitions I had cherished were to end obscurely in that dark forest, like a candle put out by a puff of wind.

The sun began to sink, and a cooling breeze set in from the west. It dispelled the heat, and our spirits rose as the temperature sank.

"It will not be very long until nightfall," said Zeb.

"Will not that give the Indians a better chance to approach us?" asked Culverhouse.

'Certain," replied Zeb, "an' it'll also give us a better chance to get away. We mustn't spend a whole night in this place. We must run the risk, and try to steal away in the dark."

"I cannot see wherein it is more desirable to be struck by a bullet or a tomahawk in the dark than by day," said Culverhouse.

"In the day you get scared before you're hit," said Zeb, "an' in the dark you don't, 'cause you don't know what's comin'. But maybe we won't have to do neither. I hear horns."

He spoke the latter words with an appearance of eager, intense interest. We asked him what he meant by "hearing horns," but he condescended no reply. He had raised himself on his knees, crouched like a great cat, listening and waiting for the time to spring.

"What do you hear, Zeb?" I asked.

He shook one hand at me, making a gesture of great impatience, and perforce I was silent.

He must have remained in his listening attitude for the space of full five minutes. Then he dropped back in a recumbent posture.

"The troops are advancin', sure," he said. "I heard their horns. The sound come on the wind. 'Twasn't much, not more'n a dry leaf makes when it hits the ground, but I know it. It's just like 'em to go lickety split through the woods, tootin' their horns an' tellin' every Indian this side of the St. Lawrence where they are."

"You mean trumpets, I guess," I suggested.

"It's all the same," replied the boy, with an expression of disgust. "Horns, I call 'em. They make as much noise by either name."

"But it is a noise of which we cannot complain this time," said Culverhouse, "for it would savour of ill temper and ingratitude."

Hope now took possession of us. We waited and listened. Once or twice I thought I could hear the faint tones of the trumpet, but I was not sure. My ears were not so well attuned to the forest as Zebedee's.

"I'm hopin' they'll come soon," said Zebedee, looking up anxiously at the sky, "or the night'll beat 'em here, an' that'll be bad for a rescue."

"Perhaps you were mistaken. Perhaps it was merely a phantasy," I said.

"I don't know a phantasy. I never seen or heard one," said Zeb, "but I do know a horn, an' I heard it, certain. They may have gone on further away from us, but I don't believe it, for we're mighty nigh to the line of march. There! There it goes ag'in! Don't you hear it?"

Tra-la-loo, tra-la-la, tra-la-loo, ta-too, ta-too, ta-too!

Now we heard it distinctly rolling down the wind. Never was a sound more welcome than that which came to us from the trumpet's brazen throat. It was the voice of help, of life.

"They're coming! They're coming!" exclaimed Culverhouse, joyfully. "It's the brave lads beating their way through these treacherous forests! Friend

Zebedee, you must confess that the redcoats are of some utility, after all."

"Let's wait an' see," said Zeb, cautiously.

Straining my eyes in the direction from which the sound of the trumpet came, I saw a smear of red on a distant hilltop.

"Look, Zeb, is not that the troops?" I exclaimed. "Is not that the troops?"

"Yes," said Zeb, "I see their uniforms shinin' an' the settin' sun is glancin' off their brass buttons. That's the troops or a part of 'em, an' no mistake. An', as sure as you live, they're goin' into camp in that open spot on the hilltop."

"Signal to them! Signal to them at once," exclaimed Culverhouse, "and let's get out of this plague of a hole."

In his eagerness he raised his head above the tree trunk. A rifle cracked in the woods, and a bullet shore the feather from his fine hat. He sank back, expressing his annoyance in vehement terms.

"I told you to wait," said Zeb, reprovingly. "Don't forget that the savages are mighty irreg'lar, or you'll get all your hat shot away afore we get through."

More soldiers had come into the open on the far hilltop, until fully a hundred were gathered there. Undoubtedly they were going into camp for the night, as we could see them setting about their preparations.

"Suppose we fire our rifles altogether and attract their attention?" said Culverhouse.

"An' then have the savages altogether rushin'

upon us," said Zeb, "an' no loads in our guns for 'em."

The wind was blowing strong from the soldiers toward us. We could even hear the clang of the camp kettles. The sun, round, red, and huge, had gone so far down the western arch of the sky that it formed a background for them. In the full blaze of its brilliant light we could distinguish the features of the men.

"They are from one of the English regiments," said Culverhouse.

"An' for that reason not much good for woods fightin'," said Zeb.

"I think I'll shoot off my gun, an' maybe they'll hear it," he added presently, "but I dunno, for the wind is blowin' sound back this way like a big current takin' a stick down stream."

He raised his rifle and discharged it into the air. The soldiers gave no evidence that they had heard the report. They proceeded unconcernedly with their preparations, and presently we saw a fire blazing. A slender column of smoke rose from it, and floated above the tree-tops.

"By my soul, they are cooking!" said Culverhouse; "and that reminds me that hunger is gnawing at me. We have not eaten since last night. I believe I can smell their food."

"They didn't hear my gun, that's certain," said Zeb. "Now if they'd a grain of sense they'd a had scouts lookin' through all these woods afore they camped."

The situation was most provoking. We could see our friends, and yet they neither saw nor heard us. Despite their presence, we were still as closely besieged by the savages as if the soldiers were a hundred miles away. I saw now that the causticity of Zeb's comments upon the ways of the regular soldiers was equalled only by their truth. It struck me that the Great Duke, Marlborough, himself, whose memory was still of such exceeding weight among us, would have been compelled to learn the art of war anew had he come campaigning in the American woods, or else Fate would have played him sore tricks.

"Leftenant," said Zeb, "I guess your hat will have to stand the dangers of war ag'in."

"What do you mean?" asked Culverhouse.

"Why, since they can't hear us," replied Zeb, "maybe they can see us. We can't stick our heads up, for bullets are unpleasant things to meet. Now your hat, with all its fine feathers, is just the thing. I'll h'ist it on my ramrod ag'in, an' if they can't see it with all its gold braid they can't see nothin'."

The hat was promptly drafted into service again. I wondered if the Indians would try another shot at it. I had no doubt they were still watching us, and I was of an equal positiveness that they had seen the soldiers. There was always a chance that some one of the red-coats, more alert than the others, might hear a shot. Would the Indians risk it?

My doubts were quickly stilled, for as soon as Zeb raised the gorgeous *chapeau* a shot was fired at it. The

bullet made another neat round hole through it, and Culverhouse uttered a lamentation. But the Indians fired no more.

Zeb moved the hat about, the gold braid catching the rays of the declining sun. Some of the soldiers were now sitting around the camp-fire, eating their evening meal. The sight made me think more of our hunger than of our danger. I felt as if I could have sent a shot at those irritating soldiers had they been within range.

"Take the ramrod," said Zeb to me, "an' keep on swingin' the hat about as if your life depended on it."

I obeyed, and the next moment I sprang a foot in the air and nearly dropped rod and hat. Zeb had suddenly put his hands, trumpet fashion, to his mouth and uttered a most terrific shriek. It was at first a prolonged shout that set my ears a-tingling, and then it turned into a fierce, shrill, and piercing whistle that cut the air like a bullet.

"How's that for a whoop?" asked Zeb, grinning. "Is there a sneakin' Indian in all the American woods that can beat it? Maybe if the soldiers can't hear a gun-shot they can hear my yell. Look out, it's comin' ag'in!"

Again he made the forest ring and echo with his tremendous whoop. Watching the soldiers, I saw an unusual movement among them. Some of the men who had been sitting down rose to their feet, and all appeared to be listening. I moved the hat with great vigour.

"Shout again, Zeb!" I cried excitedly. "They hear you!"

He uttered another yell, which echoed like the shriek of a panther on a still night. We were assured now that they heard us, and also saw the hat.

Tra-la-la, tra-la-loo, tra-la-la, ta-too, ta-too!

"Smoke me if they ain't comin' to help us with their horn!" exclaimed Zeb.

It was so. The trumpeter had his instrument to his lips, and the mellow and inspiring notes sounded through the forest. The men were falling into line as if they were going to march down Broadway, and we could see an officer gesticulating.

"What all-fired notions of Indian fightin' they have," said Zeb, "a-paradin' through the woods as if a lot of gals was lookin' on at 'em an' admirin' 'em! Get your guns ready, boys! We'll save as many as we can."

"Save as many as we can?" I exclaimed in surprise. "Why, they are coming to rescue us."

"I know it," said Zeb; "but I guess we'll have to rescue them."

The truth of his words was apparent a few moments later to both Culverhouse and me, slight as had been our experience of forest warfare. Instead of sending out scouts to ascertain what manner of affair might be going on, at least half of the troop were marching down upon us in regular line of battle, in so far as the trees and bushes would permit them to preserve the military formation. An ambush seemed inevitable.

"How can we warn them?" I whispered to Zeb.

"I don't know yet," he replied.

It was a fine sight to see them coming through the forest in such brave and jaunty style, heads up, feet keeping time, and bright uniforms gleaming. At their head marched an officer, drawn sword in hand.

"That's Selwyn, of the Buffs," said Culverhouse. "A chap of spirit. I knew him at home."

I continued to wave the gaudy hat, and the soldiers came on steadily. They were halfway to us when, without a word of warning to either of us, Zeb leaped upon the highest tree trunk and shouted—

"Get behind the trees! Get behind the trees! You're walking into an ambush! Look out! Look out!"

Then he dropped back into the little fort as if he had been shot, as he probably would have been had it not been for the last movement, for the rifles were now heard, and two or three bullets sang and whistled over our heads. But the main volley was directed at the soldiers. Fortunately the warning of Zebedee had startled the men so much that they obeyed it instinctively. They had broken their line, and were springing for the shelter of the tree trunks when the Indians fired upon them.

The savages appeared to have collected in a body, for the bushes about fifty yards from the soldiers were spouting fire. The young lieutenant, whom Culverhouse had called Selwyn, fell, but one of the men turned, lifted the stricken officer in his arms, and sprang

behind a tree with him. It was a most gallant act, and Zeb uttered a grunt of approval.

The soldiers began to fire in return, but it was evident that they were discharging their pieces at random, while the fire of the Indians was telling. I saw one redcoat go down, and then another, and just at that moment Zeb, shouting to us to follow, leaped over our breastwork and sprang into the forest, running straight for the Indians. Suddenly he dropped flat on his face, and we imitated him. Ahead of us we saw a number of brown figures crouching behind trees and firing at the soldiers. It was not necessary to give any further orders to Culverhouse and me. Together with Zeb we raised our pieces and fired at the naked bodies. Just then the remainder of the soldiers, who were coming up from the camp on the run, fired into the thicket where the Indians lay, making a deal of noise, but not doing much destruction, I dare say.

But the assault from three points was too much for the stomachs of the savages. Uttering howls, they fled like balked and ravening wolves into the depths of the forest.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE GENERAL'S TENT.

WHEN the Indians darted yelling into the forest, Culverhouse stood staring after them, his mouth open, and his gun swinging in one hand.

"Have you been wounded, Culverhouse?" I asked, seizing him by the arm. The expression on his face alarmed me.

"No," he replied; "I was merely thinking what extraordinarily unmusical voices those savages have!"

"Well, I hope it is the last time either you or I will hear them," I said.

"You speak like a wise man," he replied.

Then we turned our attention to the soldiers. They were gathering in a confused huddle, and there was a jangle of voices, as if all the Dutch wives in New York were talking at once. The wounded officer was leaning against a tree, looking very faint. His fine red coat was grievously spattered with blood.

"Selwyn," said Culverhouse, going up to him, "I am very glad to see you, but loath to know that you are wounded, and that, too, in such an irregular sort of warfare."

"Ah! it is you, Culverhouse," said the wounded officer, showing more animation. "You are right in condemning this mode of fighting. It is irregular, very irregular. Were it not for that, this ball through my shoulder would not pain me so sorely. And to think I did not so much as see our enemies! It passes all human patience, and gives one a certain distaste for the noble art of war."

These brief condolences were very elevating to the spirits of both, and Selwyn appeared to forget his wound, which proved to be not serious.

Three of the soldiers had paid the forfeit of their lives for their carelessness, and a half-dozen others had wounds, though slight in most cases. Had it not been for Zeb's warning, I am sure the loss would have been much heavier. One slain savage was found in the bushes. More than a dozen soldiers claimed to have shot him, but I believe if the bullet that took his life had been measured, it would have been found a nice fit for the barrel of Zebedee Crane's rifle.

We joined the main army the next morning, and right glad were Culverhouse and I to see again the splendid force of England and her great colonies. What were a few skulking savages now? An hour after our arrival a sergeant bade us come to the tent of General Abercrombie, the commander-in-chief.

The general's marquee had been raised upon a little hill. It was large, and decorated with much gaiety of colour. Over it the flag of Britain flaunted proudly in the wind. Many officers, mostly young and in brilliant

uniforms, were lounging about. We saw Major McLean near, and he gave us a kindly nod. Then we followed the sergeant into the tent.

General Abercrombie was reposing in a half-sitting and comfortable posture in a kind of hammock that was swung from the tent poles. Several officers of high rank were present. The tent was furnished with a surprising degree of luxury. A thick, soft carpet had even been spread over the turf.

General Abercrombie raised himself a little when we entered.

"Are these the gentlemen of whom you spoke, Panmure, the gentlemen who had the little encounter with the red allies of the French?" he asked languidly of one of the officers. He seemed to have forgotten me completely.

"These are the gentlemen," replied the officer, "and as they have been in advance of us, and, moreover, have encountered the enemy, I thought perhaps they might have useful information."

Culverhouse and I had removed our hats. Zebedee allowed his fur cap to remain upon his head. General Abercrombie at once noticed this slight upon his position and dignity.

"Are you aware, sir, that you are in the presence of the general-in-chief? Why do you not take off your cap?" he asked in a heightened voice of Zebedee.

"I can't," replied Zebedee.

"Can't! What do you mean?" asked the general.

"It's growed there," replied Zebedee.

"Pah!" exclaimed the general, in a tone of mighty disgust. "I thought you told me, Panmure, that the boy was possessed of great keenness and intelligence. He seems to be a complete fool, the most thorough fool I ever met, and the Lord knows I have seen some comprehensive fools in my time."

I looked at Zeb. The boy's appearance, in truth, had changed, or rather he had resumed the expression which marked him the first time I saw him, the vacant, staring eyes and the lank, fallen features.

"Pah! the boy is a lack-wit!" repeated the general.

"If you will pardon me for speaking, general," I said, "the lad is a master of woodcraft, and both Lieutenant Culverhouse and I owe our lives to his skill and courage."

"It is so," said Culverhouse, with emphasis.

"Even granting that to be true, I am yet to ascertain if he has been or will be of any service to us," replied the general.

I felt a flush of anger at the gratuitous insult, but I merely bowed, for it was the commander-in-chief who had spoken. Nor did the smothered laugh of some of the officers make us feel more comfortable.

"You were somewhat in advance of the army, exploring for the enemy?" asked the general.

I bowed again.

"I would infer from what I have heard that you succeeded in finding the enemy," said the general, ironically.

I bowed a third time.

"What, then, can you report concerning them?" he asked.

"We were surprised by the savages," I replied in a respectful tone, "and, as I have said, escaped only through the skill and courage of this boy. The woods are full of these savages, the allies of the French, who know how to make themselves invisible to us, and at the same time observe all our movements."

"Do you think," asked the general, in a very choleric tone, "that I care how many of these skulking Indians may be watching our march? Do you think that I care a farthing, sir, even if they had been watching me all the way from New York, and should continue to watch me until I camp in the citadel at Quebec?"

I was taken aback by this outburst, and all I could do was to resort to the ready and non-committal bow.

"They seem to take us for children over here, eh, Panmure?" said the general, turning to the officers.

The officers laughed.

I was the only American present except Zebedee. Nevertheless, I was pleased with myself. I had kept my temper, and General Abercrombie had lost his.

Having had his fling at us, he seemed somewhat mollified, and asked a number of questions about our skirmish.

"You seem to have fared rather badly," he said.

"But these savages fight in a most irregular manner," said Culverhouse. "I do not believe there is a single rule in the military treatises that they do not violate."

"That is what ails all the campaigns in this pestiferous country," said the general, in a pettish tone. "Nothing is done according to the rules that have been perfected by ages of thought and practice. I have served in France and the Low Countries. Honour and glory are to be won there. There you fight with gentlemen and against gentlemen. But here your allies are lank lack-wits, like this boy, and your enemies are savages and renegade Frenchmen, whom you cannot find. You march through a wilderness. There are no roads, no towns, nothing to lend a pleasant savour to the troubles and dangers of a soldier's life. By my faith, gentlemen, it is a most ungrateful task, and the only pleasant thing about it is the knowledge that we will soon be in Quebec and put an end to it all."

The officers applauded these words, which were spoken in a high tone. This appeared to soothe General Abercrombie, whose features relapsed into an appearance of content.

"You had not finished your most interesting story, Montague, when these gentlemen entered," he said, turning to one of the younger officers. "You stopped at the critical moment when the duke found the earl's letter to the duchess."

There was nothing more for us to do but to make our bows, which received but slight acknowledgment, and leave the marquee. I looked about for Lord Howe, but I was told later that he was with Rogers's Rangers exploring the country. As we passed out I

heard Montague take up the thread of his interesting narrative.

"He said he had seen some big fools in his time," whispered Zebedee Crane in my ear. "Lordy, an' so have I, an' I ain't near as old as he is neither."

I rejoined my regiment, and an hour later, as I was passing about the camp, some one tapped me on the shoulder. I turned about and beheld the face of the omnipresent Martin Groot grinning at me in that irritating fashion of his, which seemed to say, "Misfortunes are happening, and I am enjoying myself greatly."

"Ah, it is you, Mynheer Groot," I said, affecting a certain warmth of welcome. "I thought you were a man of most peaceful disposition given up to gainful commerce, and here I behold you on the edge of war."

"So I am a man of peace," replied Martin, "and I admit that I am keen to appreciate the value of pounds and shillings. Even here I am pursuing both peace and pounds."

"How so?" I asked.

"Well, as for the first," he replied, "you must remember that we have not changed commanders-in-chief yet."

"We have Abercrombie in place of Loudoun," I replied.

"The name is changed, that is all," he replied. "And as for the second proposition—namely, pounds—an army like this requires many supplies, and that means contracts. Contracts mean pounds, and here

am I, Martin Groot, merchant, to earn the pounds, a task in which I am meeting with the most satisfactory success."

"You appear to take a very sordid view of the war," I said.

"I am likely to reap much more substantial advantages from it than you are," he said contentedly, "and if by any accident there should be fighting, I shall be very far in the rear when it is done. I make no disguise of my calling, and I suspect that my business will come to a much more fortunate end than General Abercrombie's will."

"You are the same ill-omened prophet that you were in New York," I said.

"I use my eyes; I see and I think," he replied curtly. "Do likewise. You will find much profit in it."

Then he left me.

After remaining a month in camp at the head of the lake, the army made another great heave, and embarked for the passage preparatory to the assault on Ticonderoga. It was heavy work to get us into the boats, of which there were more than a thousand, without counting those that carried the artillery, but start we did at last.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LONE WARRIOR.

We were afloat on the lake in the glorious sunlight of a brilliant morning. I could feel my face flush and the blood leap in my veins as I looked upon the largest and finest army that had yet been gathered in America, advancing with regular and graceful motion down the shining waters of this queen of the mountains. Almost from shore to shore, so it seemed to me, the boats were spread out like a vast flock of gigantic water-fowl. They contained near sixteen thousand men, half of them British, and the other half Americans, the best and most warlike of two continents assembled to conquer Canada, and to quench for ever the flame which had raged so long in the north, and had scorched us so often.

Looking upon this army, my doubts disappeared. We were invincible. I could see now why General Abercrombie had laughed at the mention of a few skulking Indians and Frenchmen. There was nothing in Canada that could withstand such a force as ours. Montcalm might be brave and skilful, but bravery and skill would be of small avail against equal bravery and skill, allied with overwhelming numbers.

The army was in great spirits, and surely it had a plenitude of reasons for it. The bands placed here and there through the fleet played the latest martial music with such inspiring vigour that we could scarce wait for the sight of the enemy. This great burst of music floated far over a lake little accustomed to such sounds, and I fancy it must have disturbed the deer lurking in the thickets on the shore.

The soldiers were as trim as if they had been prepared for dress parade. Here the red uniforms of the British seemed to form a solid mass on the lake. Further on, the green coats of the New England Rangers matched the tints of the forest that overhung the edge of the mighty cliffs. Near the centre of the fleet a boat larger than the others, and covered with a white awning to protect its occupants from a too inquisitive sun, marked the position of General Abercrombie and his staff.

Around us the scenery was grand and romantic. The red gold of the sun was reflected in the clear waters of the lake. The mountain-tops were green with forest, and the great crags were red and bronze and grey as the light fell upon them. Birch and pine and fir clustered on the islets, and the wild flowers grew in the green grass at the foot of the tree trunks.

Culverhouse was with his regiment near the right end of the line, but the Highlanders were ranged alongside the Royal Americans, and Major McLean sat in the boat next to the one in which I had a place. I noted with pride that this old soldier, who had seen

so much of the world and of the military life, was moved by the scene. There was a sparkle in his eye when he nodded to me, and said—

"A most noble sight, young man, and a lake and mountains that my own Scotland herself cannot surpass."

It was a large admission to come from him, and I felt that if he were willing to say so much, the truth must be even greater.

"But it lacks the history and the grand associations which our Highland lakes and mountains possess," he said. "You are in the gristle here."

"But those things will come," I said. "And, in truth, we are not altogether without history as it is. Further down was where we beat Dieskau last year. And are we not about to make history now?"

"Most truly! most truly!" he said, "and right glorious let it be! Where away is this fortress of Ticonderoga, which has been such a sore trouble to you gentlemen of the colonies?"

"Across yonder, toward Champlain," I replied.

We continued our progress in excellent order down the lake which the French call the Lac du St. Sacrement, but which the English have defiled with the name of George—a name which the Americans use, too, because the French words are too hard for tongues that have not learned the foreign twists. Soon we could see the dim outlines of the ridges beyond which Ticonderoga lay. I felt a new thrill when I looked upon the slopes and heights where we were going to

find our enemy. We would hear from him very soon, I felt sure.

I had wondered much as we came down the lake why we had not heard from him already, but thus far we had encountered no sign of Montcalm and his men, either red or white. The same wonder had stirred the breast of Major McLean.

"Do you think the Frenchman will stay to meet us?" he asked.

"Politeness is said to be a trait of the marquis, as well as skill and courage," I replied.

"That is good," he replied. "I had a fear that the French would leave before we could get a glimpse of them. It is no glory for us to walk into an undefended fortress. But I dare say the French view with much alarm such an army as this. Even now, my young friend, despite your words, I fear that they have gone. I can see no sign of a human being save those who compose this army."

There was, indeed, a wondrous silence on the part of the enemy. I began verily to believe that Montcalm, as the major suggested, had abandoned Ticonderoga, and was now in full flight to Canada with his French and Indians. But that was not the character of Montcalm, the leader whose martial exploits even his enemies were compelled to admire.

Some changes in the line presently brought our boat near to that of the commander-in-chief. The large boat was crowded with officers in their most brilliant uniforms, all showing the greatest animation. General

Abercrombie shared in the common eagerness. He had his large military glasses to his eyes, and was studying the distant slopes.

"I can make nothing of it, Panmure," he said. "Even through the glasses I am no more able to discover life up there than I am with the naked eye."

"Montcalm is a fox, they say, general," said Panmure.

"Then it seems likely we shall have a fox-chase all the way from here to Quebec," replied the commander-in-chief.

There was a shout of approving laughter at the jest, and a moment later all the bands began to play *O Richard! O mon Roi!*

"It is a French air," said Major McLean, "but it will serve well enough for us. May we fight to-day for the glory of the King, Lieutenant Charteris. And may we always do our duty to the King, lieutenant."

"May we always do our duty to the King," I said, "and may the King always do his duty to us."

"It is a bold spirit, and sometimes a reckless one, you gentlemen of the colonies show," he said reprovingly.

"It is the spirit that we have inherited from our English and Scotch forefathers," I replied.

"Perhaps I should not criticize it," he said, and referred no more to the subject.

The general was still examining the ridges through his military glasses when a canoe, containing a single occupant, came from behind a screen of woods ahead of us.

"A Huron!" I exclaimed.

"One of our savage enemies," said the major.

The Indian paddled his canoe further out into the lake, but kept directly in front of us. Then he turned and looked back at the army. The speed of the entire fleet slackened in unison, the same feeling seizing all, I suppose.

"Some wandering fisherman or hunter," said the major.

"No," I replied; "a warrior."

The sun fell full upon the warrior, and revealed every feature of his face and all the outlines of his shining and almost naked body. He was scarcely beyond rifle-shot, but he regarded us with as much calm and unconcern as if we were a flock of water-fowl. His hair was gathered in the scalp lock, and his face and body glistened with the war-paint. He was young and of imposing figure.

"A fierce-looking creature," said the major. "His gaze makes me think of some of our own wild Highlanders."

"And probably he would be a match for any of them," I said.

"Perhaps, perhaps!" replied the major, in an incredulous tone.

The sudden appearance of the savage had created much stir among the brilliant crowd in the boat of the commander-in-chief.

"An enemy at last, general!" cried Panmure. "Or perhaps it is a messenger come to treat for peace."

"If the latter be true," said General Abercrombie, "I shall refuse to receive him in such a scanty uniform. It is a lack of respect to me, and I shall hold M. Montcalm responsible for it."

All the officers, remembering their duty, laughed at the general's humour.

"He is no messenger of surrender," I said to Major McLean.

"Nor do I think so either," he replied, "though I am unaccustomed to the ways of these creatures of the wilderness. But certainly there is more of defiance than friendliness in that savage's attitude."

With easy and scarce perceptible stroke the savage propelled his canoe, the distance between him and the army neither widening nor narrowing. Nor did he once remove his gaze from us. It was an odd sight. As we moved down the lake it looked as if all that great army of near twenty thousand men was pursuing a lone Indian.

"By my faith, the savage seems to defy all the power of Great Britain!" said the major.

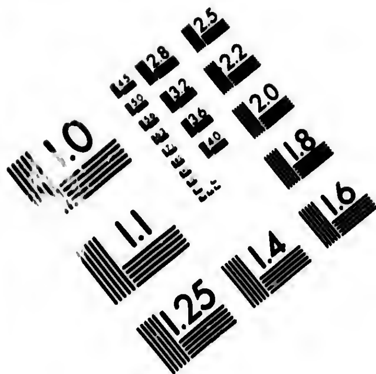
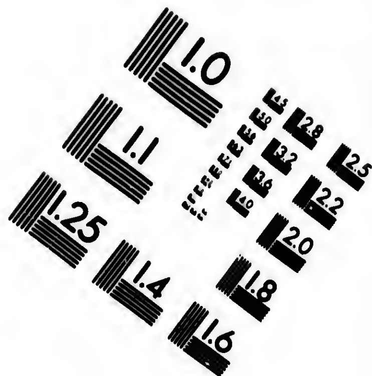
So it seemed.

Thus we advanced some distance, and the heavy murmur that rose up from the army told that the warrior had aroused the curiosity of all the soldiers. Presently he gave several prolonged and vigorous sweeps with his paddle. The boat curved about and shot toward a little cove.

"He is going to leave us," said the major. "This army was a rare sight for him. I dare say he will never again look upon such a martial spectacle."

The canoe struck lightly against the bank, and the Indian stepped out. He faced us, rifle in hand, as erect and strong as a young oak. For a moment he regarded us seemingly with more intensity than ever. Then he raised his rifle, discharged it into the air, and, uttering a long and thrilling whoop, vanished in the forest.

Then I knew that Montcalm was waiting for us.

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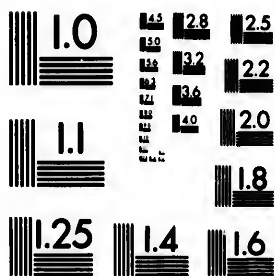
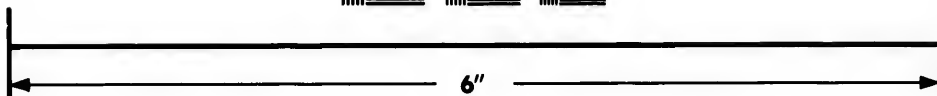

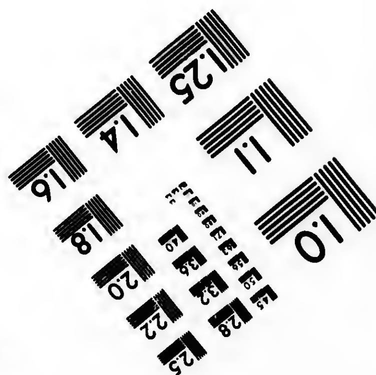

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CHAPTER XIV.

A SUDDEN ENCOUNTER.

THE entire army landed the next day, and our general prepared for a speedy assault on the fortress. At least he issued orders to that purpose, for General Abercrombie himself did not appear at the front. It was said that he was remaining further back in order that he might have a better opportunity to observe the movements of all the divisions of the army. I had always thought that a good general would be in the van. But I was inexperienced, and began to see how much I had to learn before I could truthfully say I knew the military art.

Our colonel selected me to lead a small party of skirmishers. My bit of experience in the woods with Culverhouse and Zeb Crane had won me the honour, and I was much gratified when I set forward with my half-dozen men. We entered the forest, and began to make our way with as little noise as we could toward Ticonderoga.

"Say, leftenant, you don't want to go a-scoutin' without me, do you?"

I looked around and saw that Will-o'-the-wisp, Zeb

Crane, and glad enough I was to have him with us on the dangerous business we were about to undertake.

"I've got pretty good eyes, leftenant, an' know a bit about the woods," he said, "an' don't you forget that the Frenchers are watchin' up there. The army's been landed now a good while, an' Montcalm knows everythin' that's been done."

"But what good," said I, "can it do him? We have five men to his one, and half of his force are irregulars. We have a splendid army, and he has a rabble."

"I ain't doin' any talkin' on that p'int," said Zeb, phlegmatically. "I've come along to go a-scoutin' with you, an' when I go a-scoutin' I go a-scoutin'."

We were now in the deep woods, and the time for talk had ceased, for in the presence of such an enemy as we had to face noise was a crime. Before starting upon the expedition I had discarded my officer's uniform, and donned the green of a New England Ranger. My men were clad similarly. Thus we were of the colour of the young foliage of the forest, and offered no bright mark for observation and for rifle-shots.

I was anxious to get a glimpse of our enemy. So far, save for the lone Indian in the boat, I had seen neither red face nor white. But, as we were making our way toward Ticonderoga, it was not likely that we would remain unrewarded long. We pushed on nearly half a mile, and then, prompted by Zeb's warning whisper, we stopped awhile in some dense undergrowth,

He suggested that we would better advance now in Indian fashion.

I took him at his word, and ordered the men to scatter about in the undergrowth and crawl toward Ticonderoga. We were to reassemble in an hour beside a large boulder near by. Zeb slipped into a thicket and disappeared as noiselessly as a snake. My men spread out to the right and to the left, while I went straight forward, stooping over and stepping with great care.

It is not an altogether easy or reassuring thing to creep upon an enemy whom you know to be vigilant by nature, and consequently I used my eyes and my ears to their fullest extent. Every time I advanced a dozen feet or so, I stopped to listen and to look. Then I would resume my advance.

I must say, though disclaiming any attempt at boasting, that I felt a thrill of gratification as well as excitement. The suspense of the moment and the importance of the coming events excited me, and aroused within me such an intense desire to distinguish myself that I thought little just then of possible wounds or death. I felt an exhilaration which was wholly absent when I was preparing for the duel with Spencer.

I came presently to a little knoll, from which I could get a good view of the ridge in front of Ticonderoga, where we had been told a French force lay. The woods were dense at that point, but there was a rift in the trees through which I could see the ridge very well.

I dropped down on my knees behind one of the trees and tried to catch some evidence of life on the ridge. But I could see no living creature. Once there was a flash of light like a ray of the sun glancing off the gleaming surface of a bayonet, but I was not sure that such was the cause, and the rift in the foliage was not wide enough to permit further examination.

While I still looked I heard a slight noise in the bushes ahead of me. It might have been made by a lizard or a bird, but since our adventure with the Hurons I had learned to suspect everything in these woods. I sank lower and hugged the tree. Then I was rewarded for my caution. I heard the crumpling of the leaves and grass again, and I believed that some one was coming. I took a peep around the tree, but saw nothing. The noise had ceased suddenly. I withdrew my head and listened again.

I heard a soft crush as of a footstep, and then a faint trembling of the air, as of some one breathing very near me. I moved quickly, and the stock of my gun rattled lightly against a stone. I drew up my gun in an instant and shrank against the tree. I still heard the restrained breathing so near to me. Some one was on the other side of the tree! Whoever it was, it was certainly an enemy, and I was sure that he was aware of my presence. If I could hear him, he could hear me!

The tree was large, perhaps three feet in diameter, and I could see nothing of the person on the other side. It was an absurd and yet a dangerous situation. I could not look around the tree to see who was there,

for if I dared to do so I would probably receive a bullet or a tomahawk in my brain, and that would be an end to my fine military career. I could not withdraw, for then I would suffer a similar exposure. So for a time I lay quite still and listened to the breathing of the stranger, as I have no doubt he was listening to mine.

I waited quite awhile for the man to make a movement, but he made none. The affair was bound to end somehow, so I began to creep around the tree, thinking that perhaps I might be able to seize my enemy at a disadvantage. But as I crept around I heard him creeping also.

Whether he was trying to escape me or to seize me I could not tell, but his movements kept pace with mine, and by-and-by I found myself on the Ticonderoga side of the tree, while my enemy was on the side facing our camp, and neither of us had been able to catch even the most fleeting glimpse of the other.

This added another disagreeable feature to the situation. Any of the skirmishers of the enemy coming from the direction of Ticonderoga would be almost sure to see me. I must get back on my own side of the tree. Doubtless the stranger would be as willing as I to make the exchange, for he was exposed in the same manner that I was.

I began to creep back, and the man, whoever he was, immediately did the same. In two minutes I was back in my first position, and the tree was still between me and mine enemy. I had not so much as seen a tip of his finger or a hair of his head.

Despite my peril, I was tempted to laugh. Were we to spend an entire day there, revolving around a tree trunk and preserving the same distance between us all the while? I was convinced that my antagonist, or rather partner, in this matter was an Indian warrior, and I feared that his forest cunning would speedily enable him to devise some scheme for my taking off. I believed that I must forestall him if I expected to see another sundown.

When I put on the forest garb I had laid aside my sword and taken in its place a knife, after the hunter fashion. I leaned my rifle against the tree, for it would be impossible for me to use that weapon at such close quarters, and drew the knife. My mind was quite made up to risk all in a sudden movement.

Having steadied my nerves, I rushed around to the opposite side of the tree and came into violent contact with a heavy body that was coming at a considerable rate of speed in my direction. I was thrown down, but retained my grasp on my knife, and leaped lightly to my feet, facing my antagonist.

My eyes met those of an alert, handsome young Frenchman, who was clad very much as I was, in dark-green hunting costume. He held in his hand a small rapier. We were so close together that we might have struck down each other with simultaneous blows, but something, I know not what, made me hold my hand. Perhaps the Frenchman held his for the same unknown reason.

He was not older than I, and doubtless had seen no

more of war. At least, that was my first impression. It would have been an easy enough matter for me to plunge my knife in his breast, and probably it was my duty as a soldier to do so. But nothing was further from my desire. On the contrary, he looked like a man whose life I would much rather save than take. There was a dubious, but on the whole friendly, look in his eye. I did not know what to do. I was no less sorely puzzled than I was when the tree was between us. I looked him straight in the eyes. He held his rapier ready as if for a thrust, but he smiled. Then I blurted out—

"If you will retreat, I will!"

I do not know why I said it, and I fear much it was unmilitary, but I have never been sorry that I said it. I dare say he did not understand a word of English, but he took in my meaning. He stepped back from me, and I began to withdraw in the other direction. When a dozen paces separated us, he gave me a fine military salute with his rapier, bowed very low, and disappeared in the woods toward Ticonderoga.

I never saw him again, but I know he was a gallant gentleman.

I had found the enemy, though not in the precise manner and with the results that I had expected. But I had found him. That fact was obvious. Therefore I veered off to the right in the direction in which Zeb Crane had gone, hoping to fall in with him. My hope was fulfilled, for when I had gone twenty yards he came out of the bushes and greeted me.

"Have you found the French?" he asked.

"Yes," I said.

"How many?" he asked.

"I do not know," I replied, telling the thing that was not with a whole conscience. "It was merely a stray glimpse of their uniforms, and then they disappeared in the woods. I do not think they saw me."

"Must have been the same force that I sighted," said Zeb, musingly. "There's a strong party of French not two hundred yards from us. I guess they're on the same business that we are, scoutin', only there's a lot more of 'em."

I thought it wise to fall back, in view of this disclosure, but I did not feel like saying so, inasmuch as I was an officer and also the commander of the scouting party. But this was a dilemma which was very quickly decided for me. We heard a rifle-shot a hundred yards ahead, immediately followed by another much nearer. There was a heavy trampling in the undergrowth, and Porley, one of my men, ran up. His left hand was bleeding.

"A Frenchman fired at me, leftenant," he said, "and his bullet gave me this scrape across the hand. I returned the shot. We've stirred 'em up at last, for a whole swarm of French are coming down on us."

"I guess we'd better fall back," suggested Zeb, "as they're likely to be too many for us. 'Pears to me the battle for Fort Ticonderoga has begun."

We retreated rapidly to the place designated as the

point for reassembling, and in a few moments all my men were there with me.

The ground was suitable for defence, and I was disinclined to fall back further, especially as the sound of firing was likely to bring us reinforcements. We hid ourselves behind trees and stones, and there was not any time to waste either, for just as the last man secured shelter a volley from at least twenty rifles was fired at us, and the bullets made a pretty whistling over our heads.

Our assailants were a strong band of French, and they were coming on most zealously until they received our return fire, when their enthusiasm was much dashed. Then they too sought cover, and for a few minutes there was som[illegible]y fine and stirring skirmishing. The rifles kept up a[illegible]tling pop! pop! and one of my men went down. The enemy outnumbered us so greatly that we would have been driven back, but we heard a cheer behind us, and a squad of redcoats, led by an officer in brilliant uniform, dashed to our rescue.

"Charge them, men!" cried the officer. "Drive them into the fort!"

The men rushed boldly forward. The French received them with a desultory volley, and retired. I had joined in the charge, and was near the officer when I saw him stop, look around in a bewildered way, and then fall in a soft lump to the earth. I seized him and lifted him up, but I knew that he was very badly wounded.

All the men stopped and seemed to be overwhelmed by the disaster. Then I saw his face, and recognized

the gallant young Lord Howe, the well-deserved favourite of the army.

We lifted him in our arms and carried him back toward our lines. But long before we reached them it became apparent that he had received his death wound.

"Oh, cursed ambition!" he murmured, as if to himself, "to have brought me so soon to this!"

Soon afterward he died.

I was learning very early the cost of war and glory.

But amid the bustle of the preparations for taking Ticonderoga there was little time to mourn. Three days after the embarkation on Lake George we moved forward for the great task.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ASSAULT.

"It's a story that will be told within an hour," said Culverhouse, as our army formed for the assault, "and the last word will be said inside the walls of Ticonderoga."

"But the artillery has not arrived," I said.

"It is not a matter of consequence," said Culverhouse. "The bayonet will do the work."

"And do not forget the Highlanders," said Major McLean. "They mean to go into the fortress first."

The old Scotchman was all animation and fire as he made ready for the battle, and he only laughed when Culverhouse said—

"I think an English regiment will have that pleasure, and I suspect that it will be a regiment in which I have the honour of holding a commission."

"Very likely," I said, "when both of you get into Ticonderoga you will find Americans there to bid you welcome."

"It's a fine rivalry, and augurs well," said the major. "But we will make a compromise, and all go in together."

The forest now resounded with stirring sounds, and red coat and yellow epaulet blazed against the background of woodland green. The mountains returned the echoes of trumpet and shriller fife, while the steady rat-a-tat, rat-a-tat of the drums, as persistent as the buzzing of flies, stirred the spirit of every one who had warlike blood in his veins. All around us was the vast hum of a great army forming for speedy action. Off in front the snarling of rifles told us that the skirmishers were at their trade, thrown out like antennæ to feel for the enemy. The angry crackle was steadily growing louder, and the occasional spurts of flame in the undergrowth and the cry of some stricken soldier showed that the fire was beginning to scorch.

It was now that I had a chance to see how a veteran conducted himself when going into battle. Major McLean's figure seemed to expand, and he maintained a very erect carriage, but his manner was extremely precise. There was no trace of excitement about him. He spoke in calm tones, as if he weighed his words. But his eyes were flashing, and his head was poised like that of a hound that has the scent.

The regiments were in line now, and were moving forward into more open ground. I was glad to see that the Highlanders were next to us. We would try to beat these famous troops into the fortress, and if we succeeded it would bring much glory to the colonial forces.

As we approached the open, the fire of the skirmishers grew hotter. They were stinging us like bees.

Not ten feet from me, one of our men received a bullet in his brain, and with a little gasp fell over quite dead. Whether I felt fear or not I cannot say, for every nerve was throbbing with excitement. But I did know that I felt an intense desire to rush forward, beat the enemy down, grasp the victory, and have the whole thing over at once. Some of our men were quite white in the face, as if all the blood had retreated to the heart; while others were red, as if all the blood had left the heart and gone to the face. But there was no flinching, whatever they may have felt. I noticed that with pleasure and pride. Our lines were full, as stanch and as steady as those of the kilted and bare-legged Highlanders. Splendid men were they, but no more robust than our own tough and enduring Americans.

We came into the open, and far away on either side of us ran the lines of the army, columns deep, a magnificent, gleaming multitude, flashing under the bright sun with all the colours of the rainbow. Ahead of us was a field covered with fallen trees, looking as if a hurricane had swept over it; and on the far side of the open, running along the crest of the ridge, was a breastwork, or abatis, the white uniforms of the French lining it in a triple row. Beyond that ridge lay Ticonderoga; but the breastwork must be taken first.

The skirmishers of the enemy had been driven in, and their fire ceased. For a moment a silence possessed the field, which was already sprinkled with bodies. Then there was a flash of light along the entire front of the army. It was the sun glancing over the bayonets

as the men raised them, for we were to carry the abatis with a bayonet charge.

"The bayonet is the British soldier's weapon," said Major McLean, contentedly, as he looked at the splendid spectacle. "Nothing in the world can stand against the Briton and his bayonet. This may not be Malplaquet or Ramillies, but it will be a day to remember."

The army drew in its breath, and began to advance again with measured step, though all but the veterans were eager to rush forward at once. The sun poured down a vast flood of light upon us, and everything seemed to swell to twice its natural size. The angry crackle from the rifles of the French skirmishers gave us another salute. Their bullets pattered like raindrops on dry leaves. They had taken up a new position in the foliage, which nearly hid the breastwork, and we presented to them a glittering mark.

As we advanced, I noticed the puffs of smoke and fire, and I would wonder, in a vague sort of way, whether the bullet would find a victim. And, in truth, many took the lives that they were sent to find. We were leaving behind us a trail of the hurt and the dead, and I felt the sweat wet upon my face. The men were eaten up with impatience. Angry exclamations broke from them. They wanted to know why we did not charge instead of creeping along at this snail's pace and letting the enemy shoot us at their leisure. In common with the other officers, I ordered them to be silent, and threatened them with my sword, but I must confess that I was as impatient as they.

"Well done, lieutenant; well done!" said Major McLean, who stalked up and down in front of the Highlanders, sword in hand. "You bear yourself well for your first battle, and so do your countrymen."

He was down near the end of the Highlanders, where I could hear him easily, and his words were grateful to us all.

A long, piercing, wailing shriek, like the cry of a panther at night, rose suddenly from the rear line of the Highlanders. It was the music of the bagpipes, which I had once heard Culverhouse say was alone sufficient to frighten all the French back into the farthest wilds of Canada. Then came a great burst of music from the bands, the drums beat the charge, and we broke into a run upon the breastwork.

We raised a mighty shout as we sprang forward. I was waving my sword furiously at intervals, and then pointing with it in the direction of the wooden wall. My heart was beating heavily, and millions of black specks danced before my eyes.

The dropping fire of the skirmishers ceased, and then the silence of a few moments was broken by a succession of heavy crashes, which seemed to roll from left to right. The twelve-pounders and the eighteen-pounders were talking now, and they spoke the last words he ever heard in many a man's ear. But we swept on toward the fortress, shouting and cheering each other. We were foot to foot with the Highlanders, and off to our left the red lines of the English and the New

Englanders were bearing forward in a vast, converging mass upon Ticonderoga.

Sheets of flame split the smoke that eddied around the fortress, and occasionally, by the red light, we saw the gunners working at the guns, and the skirmishers in the timber, loading and firing their rifles.

"A hot fire; a very hot fire!" shouted Major McLean in my ear; "but the hotter it is, the greater the glory for us."

I would have preferred less heat.

He seemed to say more, but the roar of the cannon was now too great for me to hear his words, and as we rapidly approached the breastwork, a new and terrific din was added. It was the rattle of the small arms, as steady as the rush of a torrent, and sharper and fiercer than the deep boom of the great guns. From the wooden wall the French were pouring upon us a deadly fire from hundreds of rifles and muskets. The bullets sang among us like the hissing of a million rattlesnakes, and curses and shouts of pain from our men were mingled with the infernal uproar.

One of our lieutenants, John Norton, whom I had known nearly all my life, pitched over directly in front of me, his sword breaking in pieces as he fell. I stumbled against him, but, recovering myself, leaped shudderingly over his body and ran on. I was not hurt, so far as I knew, but I was not conscious of anything save a fierce desire to get over the breastwork and at the enemy. I suppose that human feeling had

fled from me, and the animal that lurks in us all had taken supreme control.

Our front lines seemed to crumble away, but the lines behind took their place. A strange, nauseating odour as of blended smoke and blood assailed us, and for the moment sickened me. The fillip of a bullet, that nicked my wrist as it passed, stung me to renewed exertion.

We crossed some water, whether a brook or a ditch I did not have time to see, and then we were into the timber that enveloped the breastwork like a green shroud. Only a little more now and we would pass through that scorching fire, pour over that wall, and overpower the defenders!

Then a shout of rage rose even above the clamour of the guns. The lines, Americans, Highlanders, and English alike, recoiled. We were confronted by dense masses of fallen trees, with the tops lopped off at the ends, and every bough sharpened and pointed toward us. We had charged upon rows of spikes rising above each other, and as dangerous as if they had been made of steel. Lying behind this deadly screen the French and Indian sharpshooters redoubled their fire. Every twig and leaf spouted death.

But only for the moment we recoiled. Brave men were there that day, and desperate too. Then we rushed upon the spiked timber, and endeavoured to cut our way through it and reach the enemy. The ground was clustered with the fallen, and the ghastly heaps grew fast. I heard the bones cracking like glass

beaten by a tempest of hail. But we did not yield. The smoke sometimes drove so thickly in our faces that we could only strike blindly at the spikes that fended us off. Many of the Highlanders, screaming with rage and cursing most horribly, drew their broad-swords and, grasping them with both hands, chopped with all their might at the insensate wood. I saw one impaled upon a wooden spike, hanging, stone dead.

Some one struck heavily against me, and through the film of smoke I saw that it was Major McLean, still unhurt, his face as red as the setting sun, and his eyes sparkling with fury.

"Major," I shouted in his ear—what prompted me to do it I do not know—"it appears that we will not go into Ticonderoga to-day!"

"If we do not go in to-day, we will go in to-morrow!" he shouted. "No, by God, we will go in to-day! On, my men! Scotchmen, for the love of Heaven, do not let a few miserable Frenchmen and Canadians hold us back! Into the breastwork! Into the breastwork!"

The blast of a cannon split the column of smoke asunder, and I stood aghast, for I saw that only six or eight men were left with us. The major rushed toward them, waving his sword and renewing his shout—

"Over the breastwork, men! Over the breast-work!"

There was a crash as of a hundred rifles at once, and the entire squad fell. Only the major and I were left; but he staggered and dropped his sword. I

seized him and tried to drag him back, but he said, haltingly—

"It is not worth while, lad; it is not worth while. I've a French bullet in my chest, and my last campaign is over. No, lad, I will not go into Ticonderoga to-day, nor to-morrow either! Oh, to be beaten thus by an enemy whom we despised, and my brave Highland laddies slaughtered, too!"

I dragged him back some distance, and as I laid him down, I heard him murmur—

"Perhaps it's as well for me. It's a soldier's death for an old man, and I have lived by the sword."

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When some French soldiers came from the breastwork a little later, they found me weeping—for I was only a boy then—over the dead body of Major McLean.

CHAPTER XVI.

A PRISONER OF THE FRENCH.

I REMAINED for quite awhile in a kind of stupor. I have only a blurred recollection of going somewhere with the Frenchmen, and of the roaring of the cannon and the rifles, and the shrieks and groans of the wounded still piercing my ears, though it was but the echo, for the reality had ceased. Then I sat down, and while I sat there I dimly saw white men in French uniforms rushing about and talking very rapidly to each other. Then one of them stopped before me, and began to examine me as if for a wound. This brought me to myself, and I sprang to my feet, ashamed of my weakness.

"I am not wounded," I said in the French tongue. "The shock from the concussion of the guns so near to me overpowered me for the moment."

"I am glad to hear that you are not injured," said the French officer, courteously. "I can well believe that it was the explosion of the guns. Our fire was very warm indeed."

He added this rather proudly. I could not deny that he had a clear title to his elation.

"It was hot rather than warm," I said; "but our men will come into Ticonderoga nevertheless."

"Only as prisoners," he returned, though the intent of irony was not discernible in his tones, "for your army is in full retreat, and the fortress, the field, and the fallen are left to us."

"In full retreat!" I echoed. "Retreating where?"

"I do not know," he said. "Perhaps they are trying to overtake your general-in-chief. They say he was not near the battle-field."

When he spoke of our general his tone indeed was sarcastic, but I forgave him freely for it. If only Abercrombie were lying out there where Major McLean was it would be a great gain for the colonies. My conscience did not smite me for the thought.

"Will you come with me?" he asked, still preserving his courteous demeanour.

I followed him.

I saw now that I was behind the abatis against which our magnificent army had so blindly beaten itself to pieces. I looked curiously at the defenders. Not very many were they, though they had been quite enough for the purpose. They were a gay-looking lot, too. There were the battalions of La Sarre and Languedoc, of Berry and Royal Roussillon, of La Reine, Bearn, and Guienne, all in uniforms of white, faced with blue or red or yellow or violet, their hats black and three-cornered. Mingled with them were the short, swarthy, and muscular Canadians in white uniforms with black facings. Some Indians prowled about. They had

taken no part in the battle, but had come up after it to find plunder. The savages were almost naked, and evidently were in the highest glee. Never before had they seen such a victory. Often they looked fiercely at me as I passed, but they offered me no harm.

Our way lay across the breastwork. A vast cloud of smoke was hanging over the fortress and drifting about the forests. As we mounted the works I heard cries which made me shudder, despite my efforts to control my nerves.

"They are bringing in the wounded," said the officer. "We shall attend to them as if they were our own."

Near a projection stood a group whose dress indicated that they were officers. The one nearest the edge was a middle-aged man, swart and small. His coat was thrown off, and he was gazing with great earnestness at the battle-field. I had never seen him before, but I knew from the respectful manner of the others that I was in the presence of the great commander, the Marquis de Montcalm.

We did not disturb him, but presently he turned his attention to us.

"This is the prisoner, M. le Marquis," said my escort.

"They tell me," said the general, kindly, "that they found you soothing the dying moments of one of your fellow-officers, and that you refused to retreat and leave him."

I flushed at his praise, for in reality I had been scarce conscious of what I was doing. He looked at me very keenly, and then added—

"You are not English?"

"No," I said stiffly; "but I am as good, or better. I am American."

"Ah!" he said. "That is a point on which you two will yet go to war with each other. If France loses this war, one of you will avenge her on the other."

"Meantime," I said, "we have much occupation in making France lose."

"The truth! the full truth from an enemy!" he exclaimed. "How many men did you bring to the assault out there?" He waved his hand toward the battle-field.

"Many more, I fear, than we took away," I answered.

"It is so, it is so," he said, his face clouding somewhat. "War is at the best but a succession of horrors. The worst of those horrors is defeat, and the next is victory. My scouts tell me that you had near twenty thousand," he added in a lighter tone, "and I had but little more than three thousand. What will your Mr. Pitt, who was to accomplish such great things, say to this when he hears of it?"

His tone was speculative, not taunting. In fact, there was no appearance of egotism about this man, who had just cause for boasting had his mind so inclined him.

"I sent for you," he said, "that you might help to bury the body of your friend. You alone are able to identify him, and perhaps it might be a consolation for you to assist in this last service to a brave man. Devizac here has charge of a burying-party, and you

may accompany him if you pledge your honour to make no attempt to escape until you return to the fortress."

I accepted his offer gladly, and thanked him.

He bowed and returned to his scrutiny of the battle-field and contiguous ground. Then I went out with Devizac and a dozen French soldiers to help bury the dead.

The sun was setting already, and the darkening skies were casting sombre tints over the battle-field, from which strange and awful cries arose. With the utmost effort I repressed a fit of shuddering which laid hold of me. The deadly odour which I had noticed in the charge again assailed me and sickened me, but I tried to affect an easy air and bearing, that my hardihood might not suffer in comparison with that of the Frenchmen who accompanied me.

The ground was sprinkled with red and green clothed bodies as far as I could see. Many lay quite still; others writhed about, and from them came the agonized cries. A half-dozen wounded men had been placed against a stump, and a French Ranger was giving them water out of a large tin cup. One of the men, who had been shot through the shoulder, was laughing as if he had been wondrously amused. Yet his laugh was very horrible to me, for there was nothing to laugh at. But he did not know what he was doing, for his wound had crazed him.

Another, whose right arm had been shattered, cursed continually and most hideously. I do not think his

mouth was closed for a single second against that stream of imprecations which issued from his throat. But his face was entirely void of expression. Others were quite silent, and were as white as if all the blood had been drained from their bodies.

A few Indians skulked about the field. They were decorated with the bright coats of our fallen soldiers, and carried other articles of spoil. They seemed to take no part in the burial of the dead or relief of the wounded.

"They want scalps," said Devizac, who had the virtue of frankness. "These red fellows are well enough in battle—better could not be found, though they did not help us to-day—but after the firing ceases I could wish them a hundred miles away."

I led the way toward the spot where Major McLean had given up his last breath. But before we reached it I heard a rifle-shot from the edge of the wood.

"Our army has not fled, after all!" I exclaimed joyfully to Devizac. "Don't you hear the skirmishers?"

"Oh no," he replied. "That was not any of your skirmishers; it was merely one of our men shooting a wolf. They are beginning to gather."

This increased my anxiety to give speedy burial to the body of my friend, and presently we found it.

The major was lying on a little slope with his dead face turned up to the sky. Its expression was entirely peaceful. After all, I do not know that I had any right to lament his fate. He had been the servant of war, and the master had not claimed the forfeit from the

servant until he had attained fullness of years. There were many lying there who had heard the sounds of battle for the first and last times alike that day.

We buried him where he had died, and then I continued with the party, helping to bury others and to attend to the wounded. As the night fell the air turned chill. The day had been hot, as a July day has the right to be, but with the coming of the night the cold wind from the mountains drove the heat away. Some rain fell, and I shivered. But the dampness and the coolness were good for the wounded.

When it was quite dark the wolves in the adjacent forests began to howl, and their long quavering yelps rose above the shrieks of the wounded. Many of the latter were still on the ground, and when they heard the howling of the wolves they knew well what it meant. They begged in most piteous tones to be removed. I must say for the French that their humanity after the battle was equal to their gallantry while it was in progress. All through the night they worked among the wounded, and parties were sent in the wood to drive away the wolves. Devizac told me the animals were so fierce for the feast that they were shot at the very muzzles of the rifles.

Devizac and I had become so friendly while engaged in this work of humanity that I ventured to ask him what would be my fate.

"You will be sent to Canada, most likely to Quebec," he said, "and I presume they will keep you there until the war is over."

"It is not the way that I would choose to go to Quebec," I said, "but it seems to be the only way in which we are able to get there."

"War is as fickle as the King's favour," he replied. "Fortune has been with us thus far, but it may go over suddenly to you. Your men are brave. Their lavishness of courage was as conspicuous to-day as their lack of knowledge."

"We have no leaders," I said. "You give us Montcalm and take Abercrombie, and we will soon take Canada."

"Why not ask for Canada at once?" he said. "While we keep Montcalm, we keep Canada."

I had neither the inclination nor the ability to dispute what he said.

The night was now far gone. The cries from the battle-field were sinking, and all but two or three of the relieving parties had returned to the fortress. Devizac, with two of the French soldiers and myself, had gone to one of the distant points of the field. Devizac said he heard a groan, which appeared to issue from some bushes there, and when I listened carefully I thought I could detect the sound. I supposed at once that it came from a wounded man. We hurried forward, and I thought I saw a form skulking among some bushes, the tops of which had been clipped off by cannon balls.

"Whoever this man is, his wound must be of a very peculiar nature to endow him with such activity," I said. "He seems to be dancing a minuet among those bushes."

"I am not convinced that the man who groans and the man who dances are the same," said Devizac.

At this moment the dark figure leaped higher than usual, and something bright flashed in its hand. Then it sank down and disappeared in the bushes like a stone dropped in the water.

Devizac ran forward, dragged the figure up again from the bushes, and threw it backward with all his might. Then I saw it was an Indian warrior, naked except his breech-clout and a coat of flaming paint. He held his knife in his hand, and Devizac had interrupted his ghastly work just in time.

A New England Ranger, too badly wounded to move, was lying among the bushes, and had we been a half-minute later the Indian would have scalped him. Even then the warrior, like the wolves which he resembled in ferocity, was not disposed to relinquish his prey. He glowered at us, and held his knife as if he were half tempted to strike. Devizac spoke to him in the Indian tongue. I did not know what he said, but the voice of the honest Frenchman rang with indignation. The Indian replied in a tone of equal anger.

"He says," said Devizac to me, "that blows have been plentiful and scalps few. He says he has fought on many fields for the French; now he demands the scalp of your unfortunate countryman as a trophy to hang in his lodge."

"You do not mean to let him have it?" I exclaimed. "Why, the man is not even dead!"

"Living or dead, he shall not have it," said Devizac. "He shall commit no such act of barbarism."

The Indian advanced as if to carry out his project. Though I had no weapon, I started forward to prevent it. But Devizac was ready. He drew a loaded pistol from his pocket, and threatened the warrior with instant death if he attempted to touch the wounded man. This proved effective, as loaded pistols when properly handled usually do, and the savage withdrew into the darkness, still holding his knife in his hand.

"They are dangerous allies," said Devizac, as we lifted the wounded man. "Well, one who calls fire to his aid must expect to be scorched sometimes."

When we carried the wounded man to the breastwork my labours of the night were ended. Then I lay down and sought rest. But the battle was fought over again in my distempered brain, and the light of dawn was beginning to appear before I fell asleep.

When I awoke Devizac was near me.

"Go up on the breastwork there," he said, pointing. "Some one wants to see you."

I obeyed without question, and, walking the way he indicated, saw a tall, straight figure which I remembered well.

"M. de St. Maur!" I said.

He turned and looked at me in a kindly manner. He was in his brilliant uniform of colonel, the same that I had seen him wear in New York, but it was now spattered and torn.

"Lieutenant Charteris," he said, offering his hand, "I am sorry to see you here."

"Better to be here than lying out there," I said, with a sickly laugh, pointing to the field before the abatis.

"We meet again sooner than I had expected," he said, "but we will make you as comfortable with us as we can. The Marquis de Montcalm likes you, and Frenchmen, thank God! still know how to treat brave men well."

There was a little reproach in his voice for the treatment he had received within our lines.

I had the honour of taking breakfast with the marquis, the seigneur, de Levis, Bougainville, and other distinguished officers. After the breakfast I asked the seigneur about his daughter, Mlle. Louise.

"She is at Quebec," he said, "keeping my house there ready for me when I return. It will please her to hear that you were uninjured in the battle."

The seigneur departed the next day for service on the western frontier of New York, and I saw no more of him for the present.

The French seemed uncertain what to do with me. I remained a prisoner at Ticonderoga for some time, and they treated me well, though once a French soldier came very close to me, and sang these words—

"Je chante des Français,
La valeur et la gloire,
Que toujours sur l'Anglais
Remportent la victoire.

Ce sont des héros,
Tous nos généraux,
Et Montcalm et Levis,
Et Bourlamaque aussi."

Which, translated liberally, means: The English are but a mouthful for the French.

The French like to enjoy a victory.

Later I was transferred from fort to fort and camp to camp until the winter was far advanced. Once or twice I thought I would be exchanged along with others, but the matter always fell through. My treatment continued good. I had naught to complain of on that score, but I longed to be with my own people again, in the active pursuit of my military career. Devizac, of whom I saw much, always stood my friend, and when winter had reached its climax, he came to me and announced in his gay fashion that we would soon take a temporary rest from trials and travels.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Why, that you are to be sent as a prisoner to Quebec, as the most convenient place in which to keep you; and that I, since I am going there on other duties, am detailed to take you with me."

I was glad and yet sorry to hear it. I was tired of being dragged about from place to place, but in such a formidable fortress I would have small chance of escaping to our own army.

"You are to be kept in very strict confinement in Quebec," said Devizac, in a chaffing tone; "and you can't guess the name of your future jailer."

"I give it up," I said.

"Why, it is none other than the Seigneur Raymond de St. Maur," he replied. "It has been arranged between him and Montcalm, as both like you, and the seigneur requested it. I bid you beware of the Mlle. Louise. France has other conquests to boast of than those of war."

He spoke in a tone half jest, half earnest. I had confided to him some time before that I knew the seigneur's daughter, and told of her visit to New York.

We prepared the next day for the journey to Quebec, travelling in a sledge over the frozen snow.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN ARRIVAL IN QUEBEC.

It was late in the day when we approached Quebec, but old Jean, our driver, said we would arrive before nightfall.

"Your words are most welcome, Jean, for, by all the saints, my blood has congealed!" replied Devizac. "How different is the New France from the old! Jean, I trust that you are a true prophet, for it is most wonderfully cold to-day."

"Cold is no new thing in Canada, monsieur."

"Nevertheless, custom does not blunt its edge, at least, for me, Jean, who love the glorious heat of Provence, the land of my birth."

"Frenchmen fear neither heat nor cold, monsieur."

"Wisely and truly spoken, Jean; but a man need not love a thing because he does not fear it, and I have had a sufficiency for the time of the snow and the wind that has the sabre edge. Does not the prisoner agree with me?"

"I have had enough, truly," I replied, "and I would well wish to pass speedily through one of the gates of Quebec, though my imprisonment will become

a more assured fact the moment I am inside the walls."

"If you pine for freedom and the companionship of your countrymen, you have my permission to leave the sledge at this moment and start for your own province. No one of my men shall fire a shot at you or pursue you. That I promise."

I looked at hill and valley covered with the frozen snow, and listened to the fierce wind that whistled around us. I thought of the long expanse of icy desolation between me and New York. I shivered in my fur coat, and replied—

"I will stay in the sledge."

Devizac's hearty laugh rang out. "He speaks the words of wisdom, does he not, Jean?" he said to the old Canadian.

"Monsieur, our prisoner is not without knowledge, even though he be one of the English," replied Jean. "He would freeze to death long before the coming of the dark, and the wolves would find a grave for him."

"How sharp grows the wind!" exclaimed Devizac. "But it is no sharper than my desire to get into Quebec; and, by St. Anthony, my appetite is sharper than either! A warm place before a blazing fire, between thick log walls, with a bottle of the red wine of France and a haunch of the venison of Canada at my elbow, and I would be as snug and happy as if I were in my own Provence! And, by the Holy Virgin! you shall share these delights with me, Lieutenant Charteris, prisoner though you be and enemy, too, of our most

gracious Majesty King Louis, who, I surmise, never heard of either of us, and would not give us a thought if he did hear of us."

"A warm skin and a full stomach make a happy heart," quoth Jean, oracularly.

"You are an old man, and should know, my brave Jean. Put us to the proof as soon as may be."

We were eight in the great sledge—Devizac, Jean, five soldiers, and myself the prisoner.

We were wrapped in furs, but the cruel wind bit deep nevertheless. Our sledge flew along, the frozen snow slipping away like smooth ice under its runners. Now and then we caught a gleam of the mighty St. Lawrence, which seemed to be still and dead in its bed under the touch of Father Winter. The bare trees bent to the wind, and gave back only a dry rustle.

Still the blood rolled, warm, in a high tide in my veins. My muscles seemed to grow stronger, and my faculties keener, in the crisp air of the North. I looked forward with as much eagerness as the others and more curiosity to the arrival at Quebec, the citadel of the French power in America.

We were on the north side of the river, and were fast nearing Quebec, so Jean, our guide, driver, and mentor, told us. But as yet we saw nothing to indicate that it was an inhabited country. All things were lone and cheerless. If we trusted to our physical senses only, we could well believe that we were the first to enter this land.

"I see the smoke of François Labeau's cottage," said Jean, at length. "We will soon be inside the walls of Quebec, monsieur."

We saw a wisp of smoke curling up, and then a low stone cottage snuggling into the side of a little hill. From a window, that seemed to be no more than a foot square, a bright light beamed and fell, ruddy and cheerful, across the snow. We hailed it with joy, and even stolid Jean smiled.

"Yes, that is the cottage of François Labeau, old François Labeau," he said. "He is near to seventy now, but he still traps the silver fox far up near the frozen ocean, and when war comes is as ready with his rifle as a youth. He was at Ticonderoga, but he came back to Quebec in the autumn to help gather the crops, for food is as necessary as powder and ball to the soldier."

We passed more cottages, and presently we were hailed by a sentinel. Jean made the requisite explanations; in a few minutes one of the gates of Quebec opened for us, and I was in the famous citadel of the French power on our continent. There were many soldiers and hunters and Indians about, but our arrival did not seem to stir up a great interest among them.

Our sledge whirled down one of the narrow streets, and then stopped in front of a low but very heavy and massive building. It was of dark bricks, and was but one story in height between the eaves and the ground, but the roof was very steep and high. Three

or four chimneys rose through this roof, and a dozen dormer windows were cut in it. In the wall of the main story were many windows also, but all were heavily cross-barred with iron. In the centre was a pretentious doorway approached by several steps. The eaves of the building overhung like the thatch of a pent house.

"That," said Devizac, "is the Château de St. Maur, and I think you will find it a not unpleasant prison."

He and I left the sledge and approached the door. It swung back as if the inmates of the building were in momentary expectation of our arrival. A middle-aged man, in a costume half of the soldier and half of the huntsman, who had opened it, stepped forward.

"This is the prisoner whom the seigneur is to hold, Pierre," said Devizac.

Pierre made no reply, but led the way down a long, narrow, and brick-floored hall. As I had expected, from my knowledge of the seigneur, the house was such as people of a bold or martial character would inhabit. Indeed, the appearance of the watchman, for such I took him to be, was sufficient for that, as he carried a very formidable-looking pistol in his belt.

The appearance of the hall was further confirmation. It was adorned with the heads of moose and caribou, and with many weapons of chase and war. There were muskets of the ancient type, wide-mouthed weapons, which perhaps were used against the soldiers of the great Marlborough, the longer barrelled rifles

which had become the favourite arm both of our own foresters and those of Canada, bayonets, rapiers, sabres, and curious curved swords from the Mohammedan countries, pistols with carved handles, a spear or two, and a battle-axe of the olden time, which must have been a very awkward weapon, though right dangerous when the blow was struck true.

Near the end of the hall was a door opening on the right, through which the man Pierre indicated by a gesture that I was to go.

"Perhaps you will find your jailer in there," said Devizac. "I will join you at a later hour."

He turned away, and I went in alone.

The chamber which I entered was large, though the ceiling was very low. Its decorations were of a part with those in the hall. On the floor were many soft furs of northern animals. At the far end of the room, in a wide fireplace like those we had at home in the colonies, great billets of wood burned and crackled, casting up merry flames and sparks, which alike cheered the soul and warmed the body.

But I noticed these things only for a moment. The master of the Château de St. Maur stood at the edge of the fireplace and held out his hand in greeting.

"I welcome you, Lieutenant Charteris," he said; "you are my prisoner now."

"Until I escape," I said, half in jest.

"Attempt to escape," he replied seriously, "and Pierre out in the hall there, who is wondrous quick of eye and a most excellent marksman to boot, will soon

persuade you that you are in good truth a prisoner. As your jailer, I am on my honour to keep you from escaping."

"I shall refrain from the attempt--at least for the present," I replied.

"A most excellent determination," he said heartily; "and that having been reached, take a seat by the fire here, which I verily believe will be welcome to you, for there is never a whisper of the South in the Quebec winter."

I drew near the fire, quite willing to bask in the grateful heat. He indicated a chair made of the twisted horns of the deer, and I sat in it, spreading my hands out before the blaze. He took a seat also, and we talked for a few minutes. I asked him presently if Mlle. Louise, his daughter, was well, and he replied that she was, but happened to be absent from the house visiting one of her friends in the city. He apologized for her absence, saying that our arrival had not been expected until the next morning. Then he left the room, saying he would see if our supper was ready.

"You have suffered from hunger, doubtless, as well as from cold. I must fortify you against the one as well as against the other," he remarked as he left.

In about five minutes Devizac came in.

"Well, my dear lieutenant," he asked, "do you think the seigneur will make as good a jailer as soldier?"

"It is too early to speak with fullness on that

point," I said; "but from the first I judged the seigneur to be no common man."

"Further acquaintance with him will make that opinion the firmer," said Devizac. "You have most truly said that the Seigneur of Château de St. Maur in the city of Quebec, and of the noble estate of St. Maur up the river, is not a man of the common. Like myself, he was kissed by the suns of southern France in infancy, but a Frenchman loves adventure, and the seigneur had—nay, still has, for the matter of that—the spirit which led the old Spanish *conquistadores* into new worlds. A soldier while yet a boy, he fought at Malplaquet and Oudenarde against your own Marlborough. After the great wars he came to Canada, and for more years than you have lived he has hunted and fought in this mighty northern wilderness. They say there is no Huron or Iroquois in all the woods who can track the moose better than he, nor any soldier with Montcalm who is braver, though most men of his age get no further than the tale of the exploits of their youth. His gracious Majesty King Louis has granted him a broad estate in Canada, no more than a fitting reward for one of the greatest Frenchmen in this country. I repeat that the seigneur is not a man of the common."

My reply was interrupted by the entrance of Pierre with a burden that made Devizac's eyes sparkle, and me to realize that it is pleasant to be a-hungered when food is in sight. Pierre brought with him the haunch of venison, rich and steaming, and the red wine of

France, not one bottle or two bottles merely, but four of them, waiting to be emptied by two men who were able to appreciate their quality.

"Pierre," said Devizac, "thou art an angel, though in person thou resemblest one but little. It was a noble buck truly to which that haunch belonged, was it not?"

"He was a king of the forest," replied Pierre, his stolid features brightening, "and he was running at full speed when the seigneur slew him with one of the longest shots I have ever seen. It was a noble feat, and the seigneur was much pleased, though he is not wont to boast."

"By St. Anthony, it was noble!" said Devizac. "It was royal, and the seigneur has the gratitude of Lieutenant Charteris, our prisoner, and myself."

With that we ceased to talk and fell to, and, on my conscience, I can say that I have rarely spent a more pleasant half-hour in my life, prisoner though I was. The venison was truly fine, and though it is not much the custom in the colonies to drink such liquor, for we seldom see it there, I found the red wine of France very grateful and refreshing to the palate. Old Pierre stood for some time regarding us, though there was no expression on his sombre face. Then he went out.

"Perhaps he could no longer bear to look upon the destruction of the meat and the wine," said Devizac.

I replied not, for I was in too pleasant a frame of mind to care for the feelings of old Pierre.

A sound, which at first resembled a whistle and then grew into a shriek, pierced the heavy walls of the Château de St. Maur and came to our ears.

"It is the wind," said Devizac. "It has risen into a storm, and its edge is as sharp as a rapier and as cold as death. How good it is, and what warmth it is to the soul, M. le Prisonnier, to be within these solid walls, drinking the red wine of France!"

"Listen! 'tis a louder blast than usual!" I exclaimed, as the fierce wind beat upon the house. "Then drink a deeper draught with me, M. Devizac, my captor!"

With one of the bottles, that had not yet been touched, I filled the glasses until the generous red liquor rose exactly even with the edge. Not another drop would either glass contain. Then—

"To your health, M. le Capitaine, my captor!"

"To your health, M. le Lieutenant, *mon prisonnier!*"

In a twinkling, up flashed the glasses, and in a twinkling they were replaced empty on the table.

Remember we were both very young then, and the cold outside was as bitter as death.

"Who cares for war and winter when the red wine of France flows full and free?" exclaimed Devizac.

"Yes, who cares?" said a solemn voice, behind. "Who should care more than thou, who art an officer of France, and thou, who art an officer of England? Who should care more than the young and the foolish, who are prone to think too much of this world and

too little of that world hereafter, which hath no end? Blessed Virgin, save them, for they are young and given up to the folly and wickedness of the flesh! In this solemn hour I may quote the words of our Saviour, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'"

CHAPTER XVIII.

A FIGHT FOR A KINGDOM.

DEVIZAC had just lifted the bottle to fill up the glasses again. He stopped with his elbow bent, and the wine continued to flow in a thin red thread into his glass.

A priest, tall, French, elderly, and seemingly severe of countenance, had entered the room. He stood for a few moments regarding us with what was at first a gaze of disapproval, tempered at last by a slight twinkle of the eye. Then he said—

"It is scarce fit for an officer of France and his prisoner to be roystering together in this unseemly and unholy fashion."

Devizac replaced the bottle upon the table. Then he said in a tone of deprecation—

"What would you have, Father Michel? It is true that Lieutenant Charteris is my prisoner. Now, what are the duties of an officer to his prisoner? Should I kill him? If such are your views, good father, I will even perform the task at once, lest I suffer in your opinion for dereliction of duty. Charteris, prepare for death!"

He rose from the table and began to draw his sword. I guessed that Devizac knew his man.

"No," said Father Michel, advancing; "you ask me what I would have, and I say I will not have that. But what I will have is a glass of that red wine, which must have a noble flavour, for I see it has been sadly reduced in quantity."

"Your choice lay between the wine and the sword, father," returned Devizac, bowing; "and you have chosen wisely. Father Michel, this, as you know, is our prisoner, who, I may add, is Lieutenant Charteris, one of the English colonials, and a heretic who is beyond all hope of your saving."

"Then, since he is beyond the hope of salvation, we will even let him go to the devil in a comfortable way, and take our own ease meanwhile," said Father Michel.

Then he sat down at the table, and Devizac poured a glass of wine for him. I looked at him with interest, and I said in my mind that he was a man of the world, of a cheerful heart, and ready to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. He drank his wine slowly, and evidently with a relish, though he did not smack his lips or depart otherwise from the gravity that is becoming a churchman and a man of years.

Devizac filled the priest's glass again. Father Michel sipped it a little, and then replaced it upon the table, but retained his hold upon the glass, as if he intended to keep it ready for any quick call upon it that might be made by his palate. Then he turned his

gaze, still with the faint twinkle in his eye, upon me, and said—

"Thou art a descendant of the English, which is bad; and a heretic, which is worse. What hast thou to say in thine own defence?"

My head was tingling with the wine that I had drank, and there was a roaring in my ears, which caused me to resent his words, though I ought to have known better.

"It is you, not I, who are the heretic, if you will pardon me for speaking in terms of plainness, good father," I replied.

"Add not the sin of blasphemy to all thy other sins," said the priest, his look becoming severe. "The proof that thou art wrong lies in the fact that the Lord hath delivered thee into our hands."

"Then," said I, "if that be proof, St. Paul was a very great sinner, for the Lord delivered him into the hands of his enemies, and they did their will upon him."

"Darest thou compare thyself to St. Paul?" asked the priest, who I think was becoming somewhat offended at my manner.

"Nay, nay, Father Michel," said Devizac, deprecatingly; "remember that even if our prisoner be of the Protestant faith, he is not devout enough in it to hurt. Is it not so, lieutenant? Is your religion any great burden upon your mind?"

I was about to protest against Devizac's defence of me, as well as Father Michel's attack upon me, when I

was interrupted by the return of the seigneur, who joined us at the table. Devizac poured a glass of wine for him. He drank it slowly, and I noticed how wonderfully similar his manner of drinking was to Father Michel's. One was the soldier and huntsman, and the other the priest, but the one, I knew not which, had caught much of his manner from the other.

"What was the matter in here, Father Michel?" at length asked the seigneur. "I thought I heard voices raised to an unusual pitch of loudness when I came in at the door."

"I was seeking to arouse this youthful heretic to a true perception of his wickedness and lost condition," replied Father Michel, "for into whatever depths one may sink, there is yet a chance to rescue him so long as life lasts."

"A most worthy purpose! A most worthy purpose, father, and it proceeds from the goodness of your heart," said the seigneur, smiling at me, and then shaking his head as if in sadness, "but I fear that the task is hopeless. The men from the English colonies are strangely set in the ways of perversion and wickedness, and are given up to greed and to the new democracy, which is a compound of all crimes and follies, with no spice of any virtue."

"Your words are harsh—but none too harsh, I fear," replied the priest, gloomily.

"They mock at our holy religion," said the seigneur, and whether he was now speaking in jest or earnest I could not tell, "and at the Divine right of the Lord's

anointed, our most gracious King Louis, Holy Virgin protect him! Nay, they mock even at their own King, and nothing that is old and honoured is sacred from their profaning touch. Don't be offended, lieutenant; I am merely speaking of the English collectively, and not of you individually."

"It is so, it is so!" said the priest, the twinkle returning to his eye. "Cannot we convert them with powder and the sword? The Marquis de Montcalm well knows the use of both."

"And nobly he uses them," replied the seigneur; "but these sons of the English swarm in their colonies as plentiful as the wild geese that sometimes darken the air in their flight. When we slay one, ten take his place."

"They come like the locusts in Egypt," said the father.

Then taking the bottle in his own hand, the seigneur filled his glass and that of Father Michel. They raised them high, until the firelight flickered on their ruddy sides, and then drank their contents in silence. The wine having warmed them as well as us, we began a lively discussion of the war. Devizac was confident that the French would win. I think they began it to tease me, but soon we became very serious.

"Both our King and our Church seem to keep a firm grasp upon their own," said Devizac.

"For the time," said the seigneur, "for the time; but will it last? I would have all this mighty continent Catholic and French; but wherever the sons of

France go, the sons of England go too. The Frenchman is a soldier, and the Englishman a trader. The soldier is a fine fellow, and worth his price against another soldier, but he is not fit to carry on war against the trader. Though he may always have sword and musket in hand, yet the trader will beat him in the end."

"In particular when the trader knows how to use the musket and the sword also, and fears not to take them up," I said, annoyed at the evident slur upon our people. The seigneur had known me so long now that he could talk to me as an acquaintance and not as to a prisoner.

"They have not yet shown the proof of their knowledge," said the priest.

"But neither is there an end to the war," I replied. "They will yet come to Quebec. You will yet feel the edge of their sword."

I was flushed with wine, or I would not have spoken in such a high fashion.

"Are you a good swordsman?" asked the seigneur.

"I have some acquaintance with the weapon," I said, remembering with secret pride my duel with Spencer.

The seigneur knocked loudly upon the table with his fist.

Pierre entered.

"Bring me the two swords that hang in my bedroom," said the seigneur.

Pierre returned in a few moments with the weapons —fine, well-made swords they were, too, for the French,

I believe, have always been very skilled in the production of such things. The seigneur took them and handled them lovingly, bending the blades over his strong wrists, and running his forefinger lightly along the edges. Then he put them upon the table.

"They are just alike," he said to me, "and you can take your choice. You say you are a swordsman. I am one, too, though in these later days I am more given to the use of the rifle than the blade; and we shall see who will win—English or French, Canadian or American. It is a quiet and peaceable test, such as two friends like you and I can make. See, I put these buttons upon the ends of the rapiers, and we can do each other no harm."

I was willing, thinking it an honour to face him, and we prepared for the bout.

"Devizac," said the seigneur, "look after Lieutenant Charteris; Father Michel, you will bear me up in this affair."

Then we took the swords and faced each other.

"Take the south end of the room," said the seigneur, "for your colonies lie to the south, while I take the north, which is Canada."

Devizac and the priest cleared away the chairs and the table, and assumed their respective stations. Devizac, who seemed to have a fine appreciation of the situation, took a piece of charred wood from the fire and drew a black line down the middle of the room.

"This is the boundary line of Canada and the English

colonies," he said. "Now we shall see how each defends his own."

The thing appealed to me in a much more forcible manner than it would have done had my head been cooler.

"Very well," I said, "and let victory rest with the better man."

"So be it," said the seigneur, holding his weapon with a practised hand.

I perceived that I had a formidable antagonist. But I was determined to win, for I felt the hot blood in my head.

We stood facing the black line, and the seigneur made a quick thrust at me. He was almost within my guard, and the button of his rapier would have countered upon my chest, but I managed barely in time to catch his edge upon my own. Then I made a return thrust, but he guarded well, and my blade was turned aside.

"Well done for both!" said Father Michel, who was watching the play of our weapons with the utmost interest. "We shall have a fierce war, it seems. An old head against young muscles."

Our positions were unchanged.

Then occurred some rapid sword-play, the blades flashing back and forth and gleaming like lightning in the ruddy firelight. But nothing came of it. Neither could thrust the other back an inch. Then we paused to take breath and strength.

"A half-glass of wine for each," said Father Michel,

matching word with action and pouring the wine for us. We drank it without taking our eyes off each other, and then resumed the contest.

The seigneur showed an abundance of agility for one of his years, and two or three times I thought I was about to force him back to save himself, but a leap aside or a twisting of the body would avert my triumph. Presently I saw a most excellent opening, and thrust straight at his breast. But with a sudden and dexterous turn of the wrist he swept my blade aside, and drove the button of his sword against my chest with such force that I almost fell, and when I recovered my balance my antagonist was across the line.

"The French are over the border," said Father Michel, joyfully. "The French invasion of the English provinces has begun, and may the invasion speedily become a conquest."

He took another drink of the red wine and watched us with eager eyes.

I set my teeth hard, and resolved to drive the enemy out of my territory. But I saw that it behoved me to be very wary. There was a satisfied twinkle in the seigneur's eye, and that incited me to further effort. But he began again with such a furious assault upon me that, despite my best efforts at defence, I was driven back several feet further. The priest's ruddy countenance shone with satisfaction.

"It is a most prosperous invasion," he cried, "and fortune as well as skill attends the righteous arms of France! Our vanguard is almost within sight of their

town of Albany! We shall take that, and then New York, too, shall fall before our arms."

Even Devizac, my second, looked pleased. But I had no right to find fault with him for it, as he was a Frenchman and an official enemy.

The pleased twinkle in the seigneur's eyes deepened, and he attacked again with great vigour, but I was too cautious for him, and it should not be forgotten also that I possessed a fair modicum of skill. Presently, in his anxiety to penetrate further into the enemy's country, he lunged rashly, and I came back at him with much force, and such directness of aim, that I struck him on the chest and drove him halfway back to the boundary line.

Father Michel frowned.

"Caution, France, caution!" he said.

The twinkle disappeared from the seigneur's eye. I think it must have reappeared in mine, for I felt a flush of satisfaction and returning confidence.

The severe exertion had partially cleared the effects of the wine from my head, which, however, had put more strength for the time in my muscles. My wrist felt like steel.

I began now to push him, handling my weapon warily, but giving him no rest nevertheless. I noticed that his breath was becoming somewhat shorter, and I redoubled my efforts against him, for now I saw that my youthful strength would overmatch him, seasoned and well preserved though he was. I pressed him back with certainty, though it was by inches. But the

distance between us and the boundary line across which he had driven me at first narrowed steadily, and Father Michel's face clouded more and more.

"Courage, France, courage!" he said. "Never relinquish your hold on the enemy's territory! Thrust him back! Thrust him back!"

The seigneur was willing enough to thrust me back, but the ability was lacking then, for I pushed him so fiercely that he was hard put to it to defend himself. Our rapiers rang across each other until the room was filled with the whirring noise of steel against steel. But he could not withstand my advance. Presently he stood upon the boundary line, and if my success continued I would soon have him back in Canada, and then I would be the invader. My strength was now superior to his.

"Retreat no further! retreat no further!" exclaimed the priest in his excitement. "France never yields! Strike hard for King and Holy Church!"

The seigneur's face was overcast, and chagrin lurked in his eye, but nevertheless I did not spare him. I drove him across the line and entered his territory. I was well into Canada, and was pushing him further and further back. He put all his strength into a last effort, and the sparks of fire leaped from our weapons as steel warded off steel. Then I caught his sword with mine and twisted it from his weakening hand.

As the sword rattled upon the floor I heard a loud shriek. There was the quick flutter of a woman's dress, and the next moment Mlle. Louise, whom I had

supposed to be elsewhere, rushed into the room, and gazed at me with indignant eyes.

"What are you doing, Lieutenant Charteris?" she cried. "Fighting! You and my father!"

I had not looked forward to any such meeting as this—quite the contrary. I was confused, and my eyes fell before her gaze, while I protested that we were but trying the foils in sport. The seigneur backed me up in fair and honest style. So did Devizac and the good father; and there we all stood explaining and apologizing to one girl. She gave a glance or two at the empty bottles and glasses, and then seemed to understand our explanations quite well. She held out her hand to me and welcomed me as a guest, and not as a prisoner, to the Château de St. Maur. I was egotist enough to believe that my welcome was sincere, for she gave me a warm smile. We talked for awhile very gaily of New York and the people we knew there. Her presence seemed to bring a new atmosphere into the room—an atmosphere that was of the sunshine and summer roses. Presently she went away, taking the seigneur with her.

When they had gone, Father Michel turned a gloomy gaze upon me.

"You have won in the fencing bout," he said; "but pish! there is nothing in such things. I have always despised omens and signs as handicrafts of the devil, designed to cheat the minds of honest men."

Then he, too, went out, and Devizac laughed as the door closed behind him.

"The good father will soon recover," he said; and I knew that Devizac was right.

Then he asked Pierre to escort me to my room, or my cell, as he took pleasure in calling it, saying, with a sly look or two, that it was a pity I had fallen into the hands of such harsh jailers.

CHAPTER XIX.

A RIVAL APPEARS.

My room was a square little chamber on the second floor, lighted by the beams of the sun or moon sifting through the dormer window that opened like a cleft in the roof, too high above my head for me to reach it. It was evident that the seigneur, however well disposed he might be toward me, did not intend that I should escape. My head had begun to ring again with the wine, and my muscles were sore from my exertions in the encounter.

Pierre placed a tallow candle on a box in the room. "You will stay here to-night, monsieur," he said.

"And other nights, too, I suppose, Pierre?"

"I do not know," he replied.

"Suppose I escape?" I said.

"The attempt would be very difficult and very dangerous for monsieur," he said. "The house is guarded, and, even if you should escape from it, you would then have to get out of the city. The chances are that you would be shot. Monsieur would show wisdom if he did not try it."

I decided that Pierre's advice was good, and that for the present I would not attempt to escape. On the whole, I did not have much to cavil at, and I did not wish to give the seigneur cause to think me ungrateful.

Having reached this sage conclusion, I lay down on a very good bed and slept heavily through the remainder of the night.

"Wake up, sluggard! Wake up! By St. Anthony, you must have a sound conscience! Must I pull you in pieces to awake you?"

It was morning, and Devizac was tugging at me. I arose and dressed.

"I merely came to tell you good-bye," he said. "I depart for the front, in order to assist in waging war against your interesting countrymen, and I leave you to the care and the mercies of the Seigneur of Château de St. Maur and his handsome daughter, who, I trust, may not prove unmerciful. I will add also that your behaviour of last night commends you still further to the seigneur."

"How so?" I asked.

"The seigneur admires a good swordsman and a man of courage," he replied. "He is sure to be your friend in everything. But Mlle. de St. Maur! Ah, beware of her! She regards you as a heretic and the incarnation of wickedness. And, my dear Charteris, beware of a French girl when she hates you. I, who am a Frenchman, and not altogether without experience, should know."

Then my good friend gave me another sly smile, said farewell, and left.

My next visitor was the seigneur himself, who asked me very kindly about myself, and paid me some fine compliments on my skill with the sword.

"Pierre, who is most faithful to our cause, and whom, I warn you, you cannot corrupt," he said, "will bring you some breakfast here. It will be of a rather rude character, for we must not forget that you are a prisoner. But we will make atonement at dinner, when Captain Savaignan, between whom and my daughter a marriage is arranged, is to dine with us. We will have you at that."

The seigneur withdrew, and Pierre brought me my breakfast, which was much more plentiful than he had promised. But I was not happy. The seigneur's announcement, spoken with real or assumed carelessness, that his daughter was to be married to a Frenchman named Savaignan, startled me. It shed a great light upon me, and I understood my own position. I wondered, even at that moment, why I had not understood myself sooner. From the first Louise de St. Maur had affected me beyond and unlike any other woman, and the feeling had grown without check. No doubt Mr. Arthur had really thought I was about to fall in love with his daughter Marion, but I knew better, and Marion knew better, and both knew, too, now that neither wished it otherwise.

As I ate my breakfast I nourished a hostility to this unknown Frenchman Savaignan, who had come

in the way when he was not wanted. That Louise liked me I knew, and perhaps it might become more than liking. At any rate, I determined that I would see, Savaignan or no Savaignan. That may not have been a proper resolution to be taken by a man who was in a certain sense a guest in the Château de St. Maur, but I took it nevertheless, for I argued that Louise might be as hostile to this marriage as I was. I spent the morning alone in my room, but at noon Pierre appeared to escort me to dinner. With a great and natural curiosity I looked about for Savaignan, fearing that I might find some such gay and gallant young officer as Devizac.

I met a man about forty years old, of common face and figure. Though he was not now in disguise or shabby attire, but wore the fine uniform of a French captain, I knew at once the spy whom Louise and I had met in New York, the one who had given his name at Albany as Leloir. But I repressed all knowledge of it beyond a slight start of surprise, which no one may have noticed. Nor did he affect to know me. That was not the place for either of us to recall an earlier meeting.

Mlle. de St. Maur was a dazzling picture. It seemed to me that she had grown in beauty, dignity, and grace, and even the first time I saw her, I had been quite sure that she was the handsomest woman in America. She had come to dinner as to a great banquet, arrayed with the splendour of a maid of honour at the court of France, and Savaignan gave her

a glance of pride and proprietorship which irritated me. She acknowledged his compliments with an indifferent air, but she smiled at me. As the dinner progressed, I became sure that she did not like Savaignan, and that the marriage arranged between them was not with any wish of hers. The belief certainly gave me a deep sense of joy, and inspired me to such a degree that I am confident I talked well and showed at my best.

Captain Savaignan did not say much. The seigneur at last noticed Savaignan's cold treatment by his daughter, and he frowned often, once or twice at me as well as Louise. I felt some compunction, but I was convinced that a man like Savaignan, whatever his wealth and position might be, was no fit match for her. He had played the part of a spy, too, and the seigneur should not want a spy for son-in-law. Moreover, she was unwilling, or I believed her to be. My own position and circumstances at home were not so very bad.

My confidence in the justice of my resolve was increased when Father Michel came into my room that night and told me that mademoiselle was much averse to the union. The good father was garrulous and disposed to be friendly.

"It is not what the seigneur should seek for his daughter," he said, "for mademoiselle is a young lady of high spirit and intelligence. But the seigneur wills it. He and Savaignan's father were comrades, and he has ever been a man of his own mind."

I have never been an admirer of the French mode of making marriages.

I resolved to cultivate the friendship of the good-natured father, thinking that I might secure in him a useful ally. I confided to him that I had seen Savaignan playing the part of a spy. He said yes, it was true, and he had been much praised in Quebec for his boldness. For my part, I think little of spies. I do not think an officer should undertake the *rôle*, and I wondered why it had not set the seigneur against Savaignan.

I found many opportunities for carrying out this plan of cultivating Father Michel, as, aided by the surly Pierre, he became in a measure my jailer. Under the escort of the two, I was allowed to go about the city, though I was compelled to keep away from the walls. But I saw enough to know that the French, despite all their victories, were in a bad way. High officials were robbing soldiers and people, and the help that France ought to send did not come.

I talked to Father Michel about these things. I told him that the English and Americans would surely overrun Canada, and that the gallantry of Montcalm and his men might postpone but could not prevent the day when Quebec would fall. He listened, half convinced, and treated me with increasing courtesy, as if I were a man who might become his jailer after he had been mine.

On one of our little walks we met Mlle. Louise and her maid Marie. I have never known any reason why a man should not profit by his opportunities, and,

finding that she was going to the château, I walked with her, the priest, with obliging humour, falling behind.

It was a crisp, cold day, but we were well wrapped in furs, and she smiled so brilliantly upon me that I wished the journey might be twice as long. Just before we reached the château the seigneur came out of a little cross street, and, seeing us, frowned. He came forward and joined us, and his displeasure was so obvious that it cast a chill over us all. But Louise remained cheerful in appearance. She gave him a look that was half defiance, and walked by my side until we entered the château. It was evident that she had a spirit of her own.

But that was the last of my walks in the streets of Quebec. The seigneur came to me the next day and said it would be necessary to send me away from the city. The orders had become so strict that either I must be kept in close confinement, which would ruin my health, or I must be sent elsewhere. He would like to arrange an exchange for me, but it could not be done just then. So Pierre and Father Michel would take me to his country château up the river.

I was convinced that our meeting the day before was the cause of this transfer, but I was not in a position to say anything. There was nothing for me to do but to prepare for the journey and make the best of it I could. I sought for an opportunity to speak to Louise before I left, and luck and her maid Marie, who was my friend, aiding me, I found it. I was inspired with

some boldness, and I said that if I returned to Quebec I hoped I would not find her Madame Savaignan. I had never before made any allusion to this proposed marriage. She flushed a little, and, avoiding the direct issue, said she had no doubt that Miss Arthur, of New York, would be glad to hear that I was kept safe from harm. Thereupon I protested with such vigour, as I had protested once before, that Marion Arthur was nothing to me, that she could not fail to understand my meaning, and blushed most divinely. But the matter did not go any further just then, for Father Michel arrived with the word that it was time for us to go.

The seigneur bade me farewell with dignity, and yet with a certain warmth of feeling that betokened friendship. He seemed to feel a little shame, as if he were playing a trick upon me, but I appeared not to notice it.

"The manor house may lack some of the conveniences of the city," he said, "but my people will endeavour to make you comfortable there. And, remember, don't try to escape, for Pierre will be always close at your heels."

Louise gave me her hand in silence, and I gave it a slight squeeze also in silence, which the tall, old seigneur did not notice, and then we stepped into our sledge, and departed. Before we had gone far I looked back once, and saw her standing in the doorway. I waved my hand a little; she replied with a similar gesture, and then went into the house.

"She is betrothed to Savaignan," said Father Michel, reprovingly.

"Not with her consent," I replied with emphasis, "nor is she yet married to him."

The priest said no more, and before we reached the gate we met Devizac, who had returned to Quebec on the day before, though he had not been yet to the Château de St. Maur. I told him where I was going, and why.

"I see," he said; "they are sending you away for the sake of your own safety."

"Yes," I replied.

"Umph!" he said. "No doubt the movement will contribute also to Captain Savaignan's peace of mind."

I did not reply, but I saw that Devizac's keen mind had at once pierced the matter, and that in my absence he would still stand my friend. He gave me the strong grip of true friendship, and in a few minutes we were through the gate and speeding up the river to the manor house of Raymond de St. Maur, some forty miles away.

We reached the place by dusk, and found it more of a blockhouse than a château. Father Michel said that in earlier days a few Frenchmen behind its walls had held back the hostile Indians more than once. It was furnished with rude though sufficient comfort, and was guarded by several worn, old servitors, pensioners of the seigneur's, all the strong men having been drawn off for the war. But decrepit as they were, they kept the most faithful watch upon me, aided by Pierre and the priest, and I saw no opportunity to escape.

Thus the weeks passed, and the winter began to yield.

The ice in the river broke up, and the snow was melting. A fair degree of out-door liberty was permitted to me, though I was always watched by Pierre or some of the others. They carried arms, and I knew that any attempt of mine to escape would be the signal for a bullet. But with the fresh air and the exercise in the grounds of the manor, I preserved all my health and strength. My muscles were as firm and my step as elastic as ever.

But as more weeks passed, my stay there became terribly irksome. The good priest ceased to tell me much about the outside world. I knew little of the war's progress, and less of the Château de St. Maur in Quebec, and of the seigneur and of Mlle. Louise, his daughter. I pined like a sick girl. I had an intense longing to be with our own army, and to be on active duty again. I wondered what had become of Culverhouse, and Zeb Crane, and Spencer, and the others. It is very hard to be a prisoner when one is only twenty-three.

The Canadian spring came, and the world turned green under the south wind. It made the fever to be free grow in my veins. About this time Father Michel went to Quebec and remained two days, and when he returned he was sour and silent, and refused to answer any questions. I became provoked with him, and at last said—

"Father Michel, you have called yourself a friend of mine, but you are not as good as your word."

"Perhaps I am better," he replied. "Here, take

this note that baggage Marie gave me for you, and which I promised to deliver. My conscience and my duty to the seigneur forbid my giving it to you, but I suppose I must keep my word."

Then he went away abruptly, leaving me to read my letter.

It was from Louise, and to any other would have seemed a commonplace little note. She informed me that her father and herself were well, and nothing of note had happened at the Château de St. Maur. She trusted that I was in good health, and was not uncomfortable at the manor house. That was all, and it was signed "Louise de St. Maur."

But the signature rejoiced me more than anything in the letter, for I did not know until then how strong had been my fears that in spite of everything she had become Madame Savaignan.

I was so happy for several days that Father Michel looked at me very glumly, and complained that his conscience was giving him severe hurt. I only laughed. But as no more news came, and the old deadly routine continued, my high spirits soon departed. I swore to myself that I could not stand it any longer, and prepared to take the desperate chances of escape. I have no doubt that I would have become a victim of Pierre's bullet had not Father Michel come to me on the day preceding the night I had set for the attempt, and announced that we were to return to Quebec and the Château de St. Maur. I was pleased greatly at the news. I would have preferred anything except death

to life at that lonely country house at such a time. But I concealed my dislike, and asked indifferently the reason.

"I don't mind telling you," said Father Michel, "that there has been a change of fortune, and the French cause seems to be losing. The English, so it is reported, are coming up the river with a great fleet, and Quebec is likely to be besieged. All the lame, the old, and the priests, too, are wanted for its defence, and, not knowing what else to do with you, back we take you with us."

This was great news, and the zest of life returned to me. We started that very day, but on horseback this time, and when we approached Quebec I could see that the lines of defence had been increased since I left. It was not permitted me to observe long. I was escorted through the gates and taken at once to the Château de St. Maur, with but a glimpse of the streets as I passed. But it was sufficient to convince me that all trade and ordinary life had ceased, and Quebec was but an armed camp. I suspected that military matters were even nearer to a great crisis than Father Michel had said.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SOUND OF THE GUNS.

THE Château de St. Maur was massive and silent as we approached. To Pierre's resounding knocks the seigneur himself, a little more worn and anxious, but as stern and defiant as ever, responded. He gave me a dubious welcome, half pleasure, for I knew he liked me, and half regret that I should be there again.

"I was sorry to disturb you in your enjoyment of country life, Lieutenant Charteris," he said, with an attempt at lightness, "but we could not leave you there to live that life alone."

I said that I preferred Quebec even as a prisoner, and then we went into the house. I saw nothing of Louise, and the seigneur did not refer to her. On her father's account I asked nothing about her. But I met her presently in one of the halls accompanied by her maid, and the brightness of her eye and the deepening roses in her cheeks told me that I had lost nothing by absence.

Marie was a discreet little woman, and, as I have said, a friend of mine. She walked some yards away, and, while she was staring at the ceiling, I told Louise

that I trusted she would never become Madame Savaignan. She shook her head as if in doubt, and blushed, and then Marie came back and took her away. A half-hour later Marie brought me word that the seigneur wished to see me.

I went down to the room in which the seigneur and I had fought our mock duel, and found him alone and much troubled.

"Father Michel has perhaps told you," he said, "that Quebec is likely to be besieged very soon. Although it is against my wish, I shall be compelled to keep you a close prisoner for awhile, but I do not think it will be long."

"Do you anticipate the speedy fall of Quebec?" I asked.

The old seigneur, grand seigneur, drew himself up in defiance, and his eyes flashed at the thought of surrender.

"The English take Quebec!" he exclaimed. "Not while Montcalm is here, and has with him Frenchmen as true as himself!"

It was such a defiance as I had expected, and to hear it was why I had asked the question.

With more apologies for locking me up, he went back with me to my room and left me there. I spent two days in that little chamber alone, save for the visits of Pierre and Father Michel. The priest told me that the seigneur was nearly always absent now from the château, helping in the preparations for the defence of the city.

I would hear sometimes a great clash of arms and military music in the street, and I would have given much to see what was going on, but I was compelled to content myself with surmises.

"Come out of this room," said Father Michel to me on the morning of the third day, "and you can see the troops that are going to pass to-day. I do not think you are likely to escape so long as you are in my company."

I accepted the invitation with gladness, and we went out into a narrow hall, and then up a steep little flight of steps to one of the dormer windows in the roof. The good father opened it, and the fresh air of God rushed in on my face. I had been only two days in close confinement, but that was two days too much.

The priest and I thrust our heads out and looked about us. I did not see much but a narrow street and a maze of red-tiled roofs, but it was enough to bring back my old fierce desire for liberty.

"Listen to the drum," said Father Michel. "The troops are coming."

I heard the faint rat-a-tat in the clear air. Soon it grew louder and swelled in volume, trumpet and fife mingling with the deeper notes of the drum. Then a regiment of French regulars, in their white uniforms, marching with beautiful precision, came in sight. Behind them were Canadian huntsmen in forest green. Aloft, upon a banner borne in the front rank, waved the lilies of France. The music grew louder. Though

I was an enemy, I was also a military man, and it appealed to me. The people in the street set up a great shout, and I heard a slight feminine cheer very near me. I looked around and saw that it was Louise. She was standing at the dormer window next to us, her face flushed with enthusiasm, and looking more brilliant and beautiful than ever in the clear daylight. A bow of satin ribbon on her shoulder was knotted into the likeness of the lilies of France. I could forgive the enthusiasm she showed, for she was a French woman and these were her people.

Some of the soldiers in the street, seeing her face at the window, raised a cheer. The officers drew their swords and saluted her with great grace and gallantry. Knowing somewhat of the feelings of soldiers, especially youthful ones, I was aware that her brilliant and approving face at the window cheered and inspired these men. I groaned inwardly at my own fate, which kept me bound there a prisoner.

The soldiers passed on. The cheering crowd followed them, and the sound of music became fainter.

"They are gone," said Father Michel. "May victory attend them!"

"I add my wish to that," said Louise; "but it is a sad war." Then her face fell as she looked at me.

I believed that I could read her mind. She could not be the daughter of her father and not have the true French spirit and patriotism, but such feelings were forced to encounter other emotions now.

I remained silent and went back to my prison,

growing morbid over the thoughts that I must remain shut up there while others were doing or trying to do great things.

Pierre brought my supper and left candles. I sat for a long time meditating, looking now and then up at the little dormer window, which, however, seemed to hold out no possibility of escape. It grew dark outside, and I had decided to end my meditations for the time by going to bed and seeking a sound sleep, when I heard a heavy, dull report, far away but distinct, and echoing through the night.

I remained quite still and listened intently. In two or three minutes I heard the booming sound again, and then the echo. I knew that it was the report of a heavy cannon, and, moreover, that the bombardment of Quebec had begun. Perhaps it had begun before my arrival, and this was but a renewal after a period of rest.

For an hour I sat there, and I counted fourteen distinct reports; then they ceased, the fire probably stopped by the increasing darkness. I was thrilled with excitement, and it was a long time before I could compose myself for sleep. In fact, I lay awake many hours listening for the great guns, but I did not hear them any more that night.

The seigneur seemed to repent of his severity, and on the next day more liberty was permitted to me. I could go about the halls on the upper floor, but I was watched always by that sour-faced wretch Pierre, who carried a long-barrelled pistol in his belt. He

never relaxed his vigilance, as I soon discovered. I remembered the dormer window from which I had seen the soldiers, and thought it would be pleasant to take the fresh air again. I mounted to the little flight of steps, and was feeling around for the fastenings, when the voice of Pierre spoke out—

"If monsieur is attempting to escape, he will show wisdom by abandoning the effort. I have a very large ball in my pistol, and the wound it would make would probably mean death."

I looked around and saw Pierre with his long pistol in his hand. I assured him, with some haste, that it was not my purpose to leave the château, and that I was merely bent upon taking the air.

"I think it would be much better if monsieur would return to the room that has been assigned to him," he said.

I took him at his word, and went back to my room.

I foresaw that if ever I escaped, I would have to foil Pierre.

Two or three days more passed thus. I saw the seigneur once, Louise twice, though but briefly, and Father Michel often. The good priest was much preoccupied, but in reply to my questioning about the bombardment, which I heard at intervals, he said the English were making no progress. But he added that the fire of the ships was doing damage in the town, and the quarrels among the great officials were increasing. With such small rations of news I was forced to content myself.

I was sitting in my chamber one evening after my last talk with him, thinking with much gloom over my situation, when I heard the sound of music below. It was of a light and frolicsome character, and I wondered greatly thereat; but to wonder was all I could do. My door was locked, the wretch Pierre having done it, and I could not get out to see. This proceeded for some time, and I was filled with curiosity, but I could make nothing of it. Occasionally above the music rose the sound of voices in laughter.

I had been listening to these sounds for about an hour when I heard some one at my door. It was thrown open, and the round and rubicund Father Michel entered. His face was all abeam with good humour.

"Well, M. le Prisonnier," he broke out, "I told the seigneur it was not right that you should be locked up here, heretic and enemy though you be, while we were enjoying our festivities."

"Festivities!" I said. "That accounts for the music that I have heard."

"You speak truth," said Father Michel, "and a portion of that music was made by Mlle. de St. Maur herself upon her harp, which was brought all the way from France. Know then that Captain Savaignan has returned to Quebec. Whether he has distinguished himself in the war I know not, but the seigneur would make a feast for his son-in-law that is to be, and he is now present with other guests in the great dining-hall below. So I have come to tell you that the house is free to you for an hour or two."

I was greatly disturbed by Savaignan's return and the news that a banquet was made for him—a banquet to which, it seemed, I had been invited only as an after thought or as a concession to bare politeness. Suspecting that I was not wanted, and that my presence would be a restraint upon the hilarity of the company, I told Father Michel I would not join him at the table, but I accepted the freedom of the house.

"Since you will not go with me, then, I must return alone to the banquet chamber," said Father Michel, "for the wine there is good, and the venison is good, and the company is good, and I would fain miss none of them."

He left me alone in the hall, and I wandered about the château, examining its curious construction, so different from the mode of building we practised in the colonies, and listening now and then to the sounds of revelry, which now I could hear much more plainly. I was stirred, too, by feelings of jealousy. Louise might yield at last to her father's wish.

I went to the dormer window again, but found it fastened. Through the diamond pane I could see splashes of rain whirled about by the wind in the dusk. It was a fit night for the French to make merry indoors.

I turned away from the window and went down the hall until I came to the flight of steps that led to the lower floor. They were unobstructed. I went softly down the steps, somewhat struck by the fact that there was no one about, and arrived in the lower hall. I

strolled along, listening to the echoes of the music and the laughter, and became aware that some one was following me. It was not that I heard any noise behind me; it was merely an aroused consciousness, a sense of human presence, conveyed to me by some unknown agency.

I turned about, and there was Pierre treading silently. He said nothing when I looked at him, but stopped and watched me. I moved on, and Pierre followed after. When I stopped again he stopped also, and when I started again he started also. There was much annoyance in this, but it would have been useless to speak to Pierre, so I made up my mind even to endure it as best I could.

I passed in front of the banquet hall and listened for a few minutes. I heard mademoiselle singing a piquant and picturesque little song of the south of France, and accompanying herself upon the harp. I listened with much pleasure and attention. There was a note in the singer's voice which appealed to my sympathy. When the song ended there was a great clapping of hands and chorus of bravos. Then everybody fell to laughing and talking, and I moved on, feeling much bitterness of spirit, for I was but young, and liked to share in scenes of good humour and gaiety.

But as I left I heard the seigneur call in a stalwart voice, a little husky with wine perhaps, for Pierre. There was relief in that, for then I might slip away from the pestiferous spy; not that I had any intention or hope of escaping, but 'tis an uncomfortable

thing to be followed around and spied upon by any one.

I went further down the hall, and saw a door standing half open. Knowing no reason why I should not explore, I pushed it further open and entered a very small apartment furnished in half-military style. I judged it to be a species of lounging room of the seigneur's. It was lighted by one of the heavily cross-barred windows which opened upon the street. I laid hold of this window, but found it to be fastened in such a way that I could not open it. Accordingly, I pulled a chair, made of curiously twisted deer horns and stuffed with fur, up to the window and sat in it, determined to make myself as comfortable as the circumstances would permit. The noises of the banquet came to me but faintly there. The street seemed to be without life, and, as there was nothing to occupy my eyes or my ears, I fell to thinking of my old companions, Culverhouse and the others.

Presently I heard male voices singing. Doubtless the guests had drunk much wine by this time, and Mlle. de St. Maur had withdrawn, for the French women have not the freedom which is accorded to ours in America. The song was gay in words and tune, and I found it to be of such soothing quality that I fell half asleep listening. When one is dozing thus he is scarce conscious of the passage of time, and perhaps it was very late when I was aroused by a hasty footstep and a voice crying, "Keep away, monsieur!" half in fright and half in anger.

Louise had entered the little room, and was standing with her face to the door. The light filtered through the panes upon her face, which was flushed, while her eyes were sparkling with wrath. Her anger, like everything else, it seemed to me, became her. Then I looked beyond her, and saw Captain Savaignan in the doorway.

I had not at any time seen any particulars in which Captain Savaignan called for admiration, and just now the seigneur himself could not have called him engaging, however much he might have wished for him as a son-in-law. He staggered against the door-sill and leered at Louise.

"You shall not follow me here!" said she, very angrily.

"I but wish to salute Mlle. de St. Maur, who is soon to be Madame Savaignan," he said, with a drunken hiccough.

"That time will never come," she said disdainfully.

"It is the will of your father," he said.

"But not mine," she returned, with flashing eyes, "and I refuse now to carry out the contract."

Dear Louise! How beautiful she looked in her wrath!

"Mademoiselle has queer taste. If she does not like me, Captain Savaignan, perhaps she likes some one else?" said he.

Mlle. de St. Maur did not answer.

"Some one else! Some one else!" he repeated in

a kind of drunken soliloquy. "It is the prisoner, the American lieutenant, whom the seigneur holds in this château! Yes, that is the man whom mademoiselle prefers to me. I knew it long ago when I saw you together in New York."

He slapped his hands together in glee like a boy who had solved a riddle. Louise reddened, but she remained silent.

Savaignan burst into a loud laugh. "Well, it does not matter," he said.

"Out of my way, sir!" she exclaimed fiercely.

But he slipped forward and seized her by both wrists. The next moment he would have kissed her, but I sprang from the chair and, striking him with all the force of an arm which had a fine endowment of muscle, sent him sprawling against the wall. From the wall he rebounded and fell in a limp heap upon the floor.

Louise uttered a cry of surprise and relief when she saw me, and fled from the room.

I could not follow her, for Savaignan demanded my attention.

He rose from the floor and faced me. He was a most unpresentable sight. My blow seemed to have sobered him, but it had caused the blood to flow over his yellow face and to dye red streaks in his black moustache.

"And so it is the prisoner who has interfered?" he said, with what he intended to be very sharp sarcasm.

"Yes," I replied; "it was my good luck to protect Mlle. de St. Maur from you, you spy."

"Perhaps she did not desire protection," he said.

"I would give you another blow for that, but your face is already too ugly," I replied.

"I shall see that the seigneur punishes his prisoner for a blow and an insult to his guest, the man to whom he has chosen to give his daughter," he said. "Pierre here shall be a witness of what I say."

Pierre had appeared suddenly at the side of Savaignan like a wraith rising up from the floor, but I did not care for either him or Savaignan. I felt a great exhilaration. I had saved the girl I loved from insult, and I had punished the insulter. So I told them carelessly that they might do whatsoever they chose, even to going out and jumping into the St. Lawrence if they felt like it; and then I went back to my prison room, sure that the banquet had come to a sudden end, for a few minutes later I heard the rapid boom of great guns, and I knew that the presence of all the officers would be demanded at the scene of action. Savaignan, I said to myself, with much satisfaction, would be a more presentable sight for the next day or two in a camp than in a drawing-room.

CHAPTER XXI.

OUT OF THE CHATEAU.

I FELL asleep in a short time, and far in the night I was awakened by a slight scratching noise, as if made by a cat. There were no cats in the Château de St. Maur, at least I had never seen or heard of any, and I sat up and listened for the noise again. I heard it, and very distinctly too, but I could not tell whence it came. It seemed to be all around. Could some wild animal have got into my room? That was scarce possible in the centre of the city of Quebec.

It was so dark that I could not see the walls of the room, but a little light came in at the high dormer window. This light fell like a shaft on a spot in the centre of the floor. Suddenly the shaft of light disappeared, and then in a moment it reappeared; then it disappeared again. I looked up at the window. It had been blotted out, and now I was able to place the scratching noise. It proceeded from the window.

Some one was on the roof, and was trying to enter my room through the window.

I had no doubt that my theory was correct from the moment it flashed upon me. Who could it be? It

might be Savaignan seeking a way in which he could murder me for revenge, and then escape without leaving evidence against himself. But a little cool reflection made me put aside that guess. It was too improbable.

It was easy enough to wait and see what would happen, and I slipped softly off my bed and withdrew into the darkest corner of my room. If it were an assassin, I would give him as little chance as possible to do me harm.

A hand's breadth of light appeared again at the window, and the scratching became louder. This lasted for a minute or two, and then the window was closed again entirely. But my eyes had now grown more accustomed to the dusk of the room, and I saw that a human body had been thrust through the window. A pair of long slender legs dangled and kicked about as if feeling for a footing. Then a pair of shoulders followed, and the figure dropped lightly to the floor, landing as softly as if it were a cat, and not a man.

The man stood for a moment in the attitude of one listening, and with his hand in his belt, as if it clutched a weapon. It was too dark for me to see the face, but I was devoured with curiosity to know the meaning of this strange visitation and the identity of my visitor.

"Leftenant, leftenant! Where are you? Where are you?"

I barely checked a cry of amazement, for the sharp whisper was that of Zeb Crane.

"Here I am, Zeb!" I said, walking to the centre of

the room. "How in the name of all that is miraculous have you managed to get here?"

"Set down on the bed there, leftenant," said Zeb, authoritatively; "I want to talk to you."

"What is it?" I asked, obediently taking my seat.

"Waal, in the first place," said Zeb, complainingly, "I want to say you have got a mighty poor window in your room up there. I think I took a splinter with me as I came through, an' I don't like it."

"Never mind the window," I said impatiently.

"But I do mind it," said Zeb, "an' I wanted to speak of it right now, afore other things made me forget it. Leftenant, I've crawled through your window there to help you escape."

"Thank you, Zeb," I replied. "When shall we attempt the escape?"

"This very minute," he said. "We've got to hurry, leftenant, if you want to be in at the great battle."

"A great battle!" I exclaimed. "We're hardly ready for that yet, are we?"

"It may come any day," he replied. Then he explained to me hurriedly, but in more detail than I had been able to obtain from Father Michel and the others, that we had a strong fleet and army before Quebec, and a real commander at last.

"We're goin' to give the Frenchman his beatin'," said Zeb, in sanguine tones.

"Zeb," I said, "we must escape from this house immediately."

"That's what I've been tellin' you," said Zeb. "Come on."

Zeb's enthusiasm had added to my desire of escape.

"Your window up there ain't a fine one or a big one," said Zeb, "but it'll do. If you look close you'll see a rope hangin' down. I'll help you up it, an' then I'll come up it myself. I can do it easy."

"You are risking a lot for me, Zeb," I said.

Zeb's only reply was to thrust a pistol into my hand, saying—

"Take this, leftenant, in case we have trouble. I've got another, and, besides, my rifle is layin' on the roof out there, along with some clothes that's waitin' for you. Tarnation, what made that noise?"

The door of my room swung open, and Pierre, holding a small lantern in one hand and a cocked pistol in the other, entered.

"Who in thunder have we here?" asked Zeb.

He spoke in English, but Pierre must have guessed the nature of his inquiry, for he responded in his own language—

"I look after monsieur here, who is our prisoner, and I have come in time to prevent his escape. Give me your weapons or I fire."

"Does he understand our language?" asked Zeb.

"No."

"Then the minute I grab him you shut the door, but don't make any noise."

Then with a jump, which was more like the leap of a panther than of a man, the boy sprang upon the old

servant. His action was of such suddenness that Pierre could not discharge his pistol. Zeb seized his pistol-arm with one hand and his throat with the other. I flew to the door and closed it. When I returned Zeb had crowded Pierre against the wall and his hand was set like iron in his throat. Pierre was gasping and growing black in the face. I felt pity for him.

"Do not kill him, Zeb!" I exclaimed. "He was but doing his duty."

"An' I'm doin' mine," said the strange boy. "But don't be afraid, leftenant; I'm not goin' to murder him. I'm just showin' him a quick way of goin' to sleep."

He released his hold and Pierre slid to the floor, where he lay insensible.

"He ain't hurt, but he won't come to for some time," said Zeb. "It was a mighty awk'ard time for him to be a-comin' in here, an' since he come he had to stand what happened. It's a little way of shuttin' off a man's breathin' that I learned from the Iroquois. I guess we'd better tumble him in the corner."

We dragged him to one side, and then I grasped the rope that hung from the window. Zeb gave me a strong push, and in a moment or two I was squeezing through the narrow aperture. Zeb followed up the rope with the agility of a sailor, and presently both of us lay flat on the roof.

"Keep close," whispered Zeb, "'cause the night ain't so powerful dark that some one might not see us on the roof, and that would make a pesky lot of trouble for us."

"What time is it?" I asked.

"'Bout two in the mornin'," he said, "an' there ain't many stirrin' besides the sentinels. But there's a power of them, an' they're watchin' mighty close now that the English are so nigh."

A soldier passed presently, his arms jingling, but he did not look up and see the two blotches on the roof of the Château de St. Maur.

"We want to get over on the other side," said Zeb. "That's the back side, an' we won't be seen there."

We climbed over the comb of the roof to the other side, which we found to face some outhouses and other little buildings. The eaves reached so near to the ground that we dropped down without making any noise. We slunk along among the outbuildings, Zeb carrying his rifle and the bundle that had lain beside it on the roof.

"Leftenant, I think you'd better change your clothes now an' turn Frenchman for awhile," said Zeb, when we stopped in the shadow of one of the buildings.

Then I noticed for the first time that Zeb's own attire was that of a Canadian huntsman.

"Do you talk their language?" I asked.

"Certain," he replied, as he proceeded to unroll the bundle. "As good as you do, leftenant. I could fool old Montcalm himself. I haven't been livin' along the Canadian border so long for nothin'."

From the bundle he quickly produced a uniform much like his own. I divested myself of my outer clothing and put it on.

Zeb took my discarded garments and cast them into one of the outhouses.

"There's a cow in there," he said. "I hear her chawin' the cud. Maybe she'll take a notion to chaw up your old clothes, an' if she does she's welcome to 'em."

Which was a curt way of disposing of the sightly uniform of which I had once been so proud.

"Now you don't forget what we are?" said Zeb.

"You have not yet informed me on that point," I said.

"Waal, we're Canadian scouts just come into Quebec, an' we're tryin' to get out ag'in to see what mischief the enemy are plottin'. Don't forget, for we may be asked troublesome questions."

I made up my mind in case we were questioned to let Zeb do all the talking.

We took a look at our weapons to see that they were ready for any emergency that might arise, and went into the street. Quebec was surrounded by high and thick stone walls, and I knew that the only way for us to get out was to pass through one of the gates. What Zeb's plan was I could not guess.

There seemed to be more stir now. Many soldiers were about. Occasionally officers galloped by, their horses' feet ringing loud and clear on the hard stones. But nobody paid any attention to us for some time, as, indeed, there was small cause for them to do, since there was a plenty of our apparent kind in the city. I was strolling along a bit behind Zeb when some one struck me a sound blow on the back.

"What service are you on to-night, comrade? Are you going to have a shot at the English?" asked a hearty voice.

Two French regulars—at least they wore the uniform of regulars—had come up behind us, and had taken this abrupt manner of accosting us. They were somewhat in liquor, and wished to be friendly.

"No," said Zeb, who had turned around and who spoke a very fair French. "The English are to rest to-night, so far as we are concerned. But in this barrel I carry the death warrant of a redcoat, ready for my use whenever I choose to serve it."

He tapped the barrel of his rifle as he spoke. The Frenchmen laughed.

"You are sharpshooters, I take it?" said one of them.

"Yes," replied Zeb.

"Were you at Ticonderoga?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Zeb; "and I saw the English go down there like grass before an autumn fire."

"Alas! I was not there," said the Frenchman, "and it is the regret of my life. *Diable*, how I wish I could have had a part in that great victory! Come into this wine-cellar, friend, and tell us about it while we quench our thirst."

A light twinkling in the basement of a stone building indicated the wine-shop of which he spoke. Zeb gave me an expressive glance, and we accompanied the soldiers. There was no other customer in the place, and mine host, when he had filled our glasses, returned to his comfortable doze in the corner.

I constituted myself the narrator, and began to tell about Ticonderoga. As I had been there, I did not lack for facts. The whole terrible scene returned, and I found myself describing it with a fluency and force of which I did not deem myself capable. I must have drawn a vivid picture, for one of my auditors exclaimed—

"Bravo! bravo! If he fought as well as he tells of the fight, then he must have been ten times a hero!"

"The story is worthy of more wine," said the second, and he immediately ordered the landlord to fill up the glasses again. Both Frenchmen were now very much intoxicated.

"We'll slip away from them presently," whispered Zeb to me.

"When do you think the English will attack us?" asked one of the Frenchmen.

"It will be too soon for them whenever it may be," replied Zeb.

"Bravo, comrade!" replied the Frenchman. "That is the spirit of a French soldier!"

The door of the wine-shop stood open, and at that moment another man walked in. I gave a start of surprise and alarm when I saw that it was Savaignan. I could not mistake his face, and, moreover, there was the blue and black spot on it that my fist had made. I pushed a little further back against the wall, hoping he would not see me in the semidarkness there.

He called for some wine and drank it. Then, as he

turned away, his eyes alighted upon me, and I saw the flash of recognition.

"The seigneur's prisoner!" he exclaimed. "Men," he continued, seizing one of the French soldiers by the shoulder, "what are you doing here with this man? He is an escaped English prisoner."

"You speak false words!" exclaimed the soldier, rousing up, for he had been dropping asleep. "He is a most gallant Frenchman, and he was at Ticonderoga. He has just been telling us a fine story about it."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Savaignan, roughly. "He is an English officer, and he must be arrested at once."

"And I tell you," said the soldier, angrily, "that he is a most valorous comrade and a true Frenchman."

I saw which way the wind was blowing, and made a swift resolution to take advantage of it.

"Comrades," I said appealingly, "I saw this officer flinch from the enemy's fire at Ticonderoga. He knows that I saw him, and he hates me for it and would persecute me. Will you help him do it?"

Now I recognized that this was a most flimsy tale, and that the soldiers in ordinary times would not have dared to raise their hands against an officer, even had the tale been a better one. But I had not miscalculated the effects of their drunkenness. They arose in a high state of indignation and announced that I should not be touched, that they had known me all their lives, that we were born in the same village in France, and many other things to similar purpose and effect.

"You are drunken liars!" said Savaignan, scornfully. "This man is my prisoner, and he shall go with me."

Zeb hitherto had been sitting in the corner silent. At this he sprang to his feet and, with an appearance of great fury, exclaimed—

"What! do you call my comrades liars and drunkards? Dog of an officer, take that!"

He struck Savaignan such a smart blow on the head with his gun-barrel that the Frenchman fell, bleeding like a pig and half unconscious.

"Run, comrades, run!" exclaimed Zeb, "or we'll all be in the guardhouse soon."

This was a fate that the French soldiers courted no more than we, for they knew the consequences of striking an officer, and they dashed out at the open door, followed by Zeb and me. Luckily there was nobody in the street, and when the Frenchmen darted around the corner, thinking of nothing but to get as far as possible from the wine-shop, we turned in another direction, and in a minute they were out of sight.

"'Twas cleverly done," said Zeb, with a chuckle, "and that French officer will have a pretty sore head for nigh on to a week. He 'peared to know you, leftenant."

I explained who Savaignan was.

"Had trouble with him over a gal," said Zeb, tersely. "That's bad. He'll follow you an' try to find you. Leftenant, we must get out of this city just as quick as we can."

CHAPTER XXII.

THROUGH THE GATE.

We slunk about the town, watching in shadows and hiding in corners, until daylight approached, finding in the meanwhile no opportunity to escape. Zeb said that only the Palace gate was left unbarricaded, and at last we decided that we would run the gauntlet there, as it seemed to be our only chance. I regretted deeply our meeting with Savaignan. I knew that he would recover quickly from Zeb's blow, and I feared that he would take some measure to prevent our escape.

I felt much apprehension as we approached the gate.

"It looks like rashness, Zeb," I said.

"It is rashness, leftenant, but we've got to try it. There ain't nothin' else to do," he replied.

"Ticonderoga is the password, you said?"

"Ticonderoga it is, and nothin' else. That's the reason we've got to get out now, for the password will be changed to-day an' then we won't know it."

"All right, go on, and I'll take the chance with you."

We were near the gate. The sun was rising high in the heavens, flooding the city, its stone walls, and red roofs with sunshine. Soldiers were passing out at the gate. With some such crowd as this we hoped to pass out too.

As we drew near we heard the steady beat of a drum.

"Fortune is with us!" I exclaimed. "Look, a company is passing out now!"

"So 'tis," replied Zeb. "It's our chance, leftenant. See the skirmishers hangin' long behind there! We must drop in with 'em."

It was easy enough to follow this suggestion, and in a few moments we were slouching along as if we belonged to the company. Some of the skirmishers had already gone through, and my heart was beating high at the prospect of the easy success of our plan, when the officer in command at the gate told us to stop. Something in our appearance, the difference in the set of our costumes perhaps, aroused his suspicions.

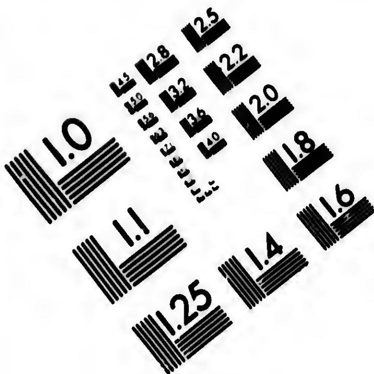
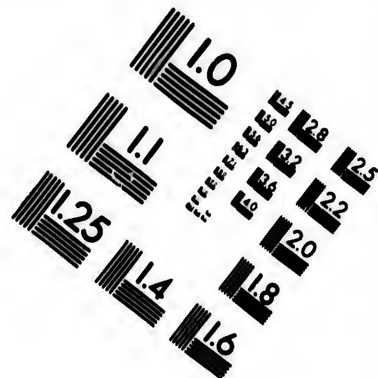
Zeb and I stopped, for we knew that only by ready compliance could we allay his doubts.

"Do you belong to this company?" he asked sharply.

"We are attached to it as sharpshooters," I replied.

"You do not look like Frenchmen," he replied. "Savaignan, Savaignan! Come here!" he called the next moment.

I started violently when he called the name Savaignan, and then looked at Zeb. He made no movement,

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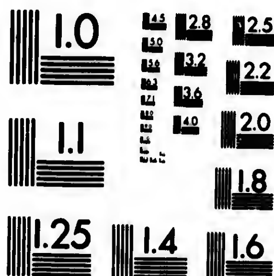
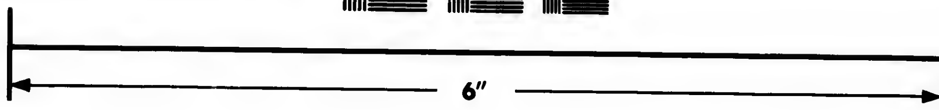
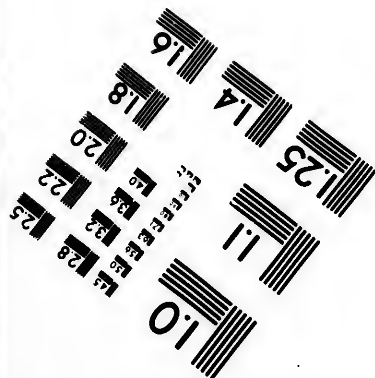

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although he now knew what the name Savaignan meant, and I imitated his self-command.

Captain Savaignan approached, and, of course, recognized me instantly. The fellow knew that only the Palace gate was now used, and he must have come there for the express purpose of cutting us off.

"Captain," said the officer, "here are two men who say they are skirmishers attached to the company that is passing out; they do not appear to me to be Frenchmen. Will you take a look at them?"

Savaignan could not restrain his exultation. "They lie when they say they are Frenchmen," he replied. "This man is Lieutenant Edward Charteris, an American officer, who has been a prisoner at the Château de St. Maur, and has escaped. The other is a spy, who should be shot immediately."

"Ah!" said the officer. "This is important."

I saw that we must brazen it out in some manner. "Monsieur is mistaken," I said politely. "I never saw him before, and I do not think that he ever saw me. My name is Jean Duval, and my comrade here is Raoul Chapin."

I spoke with great earnestness. It is not always necessary to tell the truth to appear earnest. The officer seemed to be impressed.

"Do you think you could be mistaken, Savaignan?" he asked doubtfully.

"Mistaken, *sacré*! I know the man as well as I do you, and I have been waiting for him here," replied Savaignan.

"Monsieur is deceived by some facial resemblance," I replied lightly. "I hope, sir, you will permit us to join our company at once."

"These men should be arrested immediately," said Savaignan, fiercely.

This remark seemed to anger the officer. I suppose he resented Savaignan's heat as an unjust interference with his own affair. Besides, he looked like a sympathetic fellow who would not care to have anybody hanged or shot.

"Do you know any one who can vouch for you?" he asked me.

"None except the Seigneur of Château de St. Maur," I answered boldly. "Raoul and I have lived upon his estate in this province."

It was a comprehensive lie, and I felt some fear about it the moment it was out.

"Then, if you know the seigneur so well," said the officer, "doubtless you know his daughter, the beautiful Mlle. Louise?"

"Oh, yes," I said glibly. "I have seen her scores of times."

"That is fortunate," he said, "for then we shall settle this matter instantly. It so happens that Mlle. de St. Maur herself has come to the gate this morning to see the soldiers pass out. Felix, ask mademoiselle to have the goodness to come here."

A soldier stepped aside and returned in a moment with Mlle. de St. Maur and her pert little maid Marie.

"Mlle. de St. Maur," said the officer, bowing low,

"here are two men, one of whom Captain Savaignan says is a spy, and the other an American officer, Lieutenant Charteris, a prisoner who has escaped from your father's house. The latter, on the contrary, says that they are French soldiers, and have been retainers of your father's. Will you kindly decide this question for us?"

A deadly pallor overspread the face of Louise, and she trembled. I was about to step forward, declare myself, and release her from such a position when up spoke the good little Marie, bless her soul!

"Know them!" she exclaimed. "I should think mademoiselle would know them! And two lazy scamps they are! Jean, you rascal, and you, too, Raoul, what are you doing here? Why are you not out there fighting the English like brave Frenchmen? The seigneur will use a stick on you both when he hears that you have been skulking here in the city. Give me your gun, Jean, and I'll go fight if you're afraid!"

She delivered these words with all the heat and fury of a little spitfire; she pulled one of Zeb's long tow locks smartly, and the officer laughed loudly. He had not noticed Louise's paleness.

"Savaignan," said he, turning triumphantly to the captain, "there is a medical man in the city much skilled in the treatment of the eyesight. I would advise you to hold consultation with him as soon as the opportunity may permit. Pass on, men!"

We obeyed the command, and a half-minute later were outside of the walls of Quebec.

"Zeb," I said, when we had gone a short distance, "we probably owe our lives to that little French maid."

"A woman is curious," said Zeb; "a city or a campaign is less to her than the luck of somebody she likes."

We took a wide circuit, intending to reach the camp of Wolfe, which Zeb said was beyond the Montmorency.

We had followed along in the trail of the company, to which we claimed to belong, until we were a fair measure of space from the walls. Then we began to edge away. This we had no great difficulty in doing, and we continued the process with such success that soon we found ourselves beyond the sight of the French and on our way to our own army. We walked swiftly for some time and without interruption. Then Zeb began to grow suspicious, and he stopped at intervals to listen.

"Leftenant, I think some one is followin' us," said he at last.

"We've left them all behind long ago."

"So I was beginnin' to think myself, but I've changed my mind about it. There's somebody hangin' along on our tracks, sure's we're both livin' sinners."

I could hear no suspicious sound, but, the lad's ears being more acute than mine, I thought he must be right. But we did not like to stop. So we went on a little further, and Zeb again said we were followed.

"If you'll wait here a minute, leftenant," he said, "I'll go back an' see what it is. Don't stir while I'm gone unless you have to."

He returned in five minutes, a very large degree of disgust expressed upon his face.

"Whatever it was," he said, "it's been too smart for me, for it's cleared out."

"Some wandering Canadian peasant," I said; and we resumed our flight.

Zeb calculated that we would reach the army in about four more hours. We were compelled to make our route circuitous in order to avoid the French and Indian skirmishers and scouts. I asked many questions of Zeb about the army, and it made me exceeding glad to hear that the men were in fine spirits and put great confidence in their general.

We came presently to a little clump of trees and sat down to rest a bit, for we had been on our feet many hours, and were growing tired. I leaned back against the tree, and before I had been there a half-minute a rifle cracked in some adjacent bushes and a bullet buried itself in the tree very near to my head.

"Get behind a tree!" shouted Zeb, and in a minute both of us were burrowing behind trees like Indians.

"It's the fellow that's been followin' us, whoever he is," said Zeb, whose tree was very near to my own. "I was a fool not to hunt longer for him. Now he's got us treed, an' may keep us here until a lot of the French come along an' take us."

"You think it is only one man?" I asked.

"Certain," replied Zeb. "When I heard the noise afore, it sounded like one man walkin' along, an', besides, it was only one that fired, and if there had been more'n one they'd all have shot in a lump."

"If it is only one," I said, "why can't we stalk him? The trees are pretty thick here. You curve to the left, I'll curve to the right, and we'll come down on him on both sides."

"Good 'nuff," said Zeb. "You've got your pistol. You could have my rifle, but I guess it would be in your way. Don't make any more noise than you can help."

We instantly began the execution of our plan. I crept along the ground and made fair speed. I had fixed in my mind the point whence the rifle-shot came, and hoped to surprise our enemy. It is not a pleasant thing to creep thus upon a foe who may turn and rend you, but its necessity was obvious. This skulking pursuer might continue to follow us and shoot us both down. His pursuit must be stopped.

Thus thinking, I made my way through the undergrowth, and when I came to a little knoll and looked down the other side of it I saw a man squatted in the grass behind a tree. He had just finished loading his rifle, and peeped from behind the tree as if looking for a target. I had no doubt that I was the target for which he was looking, for the man was old and grey, and none other than Pierre. I guessed it at once. In some manner he had contrived to follow us, and he intended either to take me back to Quebec or stop my

further flight with a bullet from the ancient French weapon which he carried. I could have shot Pierre with perfect ease from where I sat, and perhaps I would have been justified in doing so, but I had no stomach for such an act. Instead I lay still and watched him for a little while. The old fellow squirmed about at a great rate, peeping first from one side of the tree and then the other, thrusting out the muzzle of his gun and then drawing it back. By-and-by a look of perplexity began to overshadow his face. I knew he was wondering what had become of us, and I could have laughed at his mystification. Presently I looked across and saw Zeb lying behind a tree on the other side of him. He had just raised his rifle and was drawing a bead on old Pierre when I shook my head at him violently. Fortunately he saw me, and, lowering his rifle, circled around and joined me.

"It's the old fellow I choked in your room last night, ain't it?" he asked.

I nodded.

"An' I guess he's been followin' us all the time to bring you back."

I nodded again.

"Waal, he may mean well 'nuff," said Zeb, "but he ain't much on the scout. He thinks he's cornered us, an' we've cornered him."

"Let's see what he'll do," I suggested.

"All right," replied Zeb. "I don't mind a little fun myself."

The old fellow began to grow very impatient. He

would put his ear to the earth and listen with great interest. Then he would crawl forward for a better view. At last he stretched his rifle by his side, holding it with one hand, and began to crawl toward another tree about fifteen feet further on.

"Suppose we stop him now?" I said to Zeb.

He assented, and we began to stalk Pierre. We did it so successfully that we came close up to him and could have reached out and touched his foot, yet he never heard us. Zeb put his rifle down on the ground, rose up on all fours, and, suddenly springing through the air like a cat, came down upon the back of Pierre.

The Frenchman uttered a cry and flattened out on his face. Zeb hopped off his back, took the rifle from Pierre's nerveless hand, and stood up. I, too, rose to my feet. Pierre gasped like a dying deer, and presently, when his breath began to return to him, sat up and began to look at us with surprised eyes.

"Were you looking for me, Pierre, my good man?" I asked.

"I was looking for monsieur," he replied.

"An' you have found him," added Zeb.

"Pierre," I said in an aggrieved tone, "why do you pursue me thus? The bullet that you fired at me just now missed me scarce an inch."

"The seigneur's commands were that I should watch you," replied Pierre, "and I obey the seigneur."

"Then you have certainly obeyed him," I said. "You have performed your full duty; now go back to him and leave us alone."

"But my orders were not to let you escape," said Pierre, obstinately.

"But how are you going to prevent it, my good Pierre?" I asked.

He seemed puzzled, and then repeated like a machine—

"But my orders from the seigneur were not to let you escape."

"He ought to be a good soldier," commented Zeb, with a grin. "He's so powerful partickler about orders."

"Pierre," I said, "you've done all you could. You've followed me a long distance. You shot at me, and it is the fault of your aim and not of your intent t ' am not dead. Now return to the seigneur and tell him that you overtook me but could not bring me back."

"An' tell the pretty gal, his daughter, that Leftenant Charteris, of the Royal Americans, is well an' a-doin' well," put in Zeb.

"Be silent, Zeb!" I cried, though I was not displeased.

"But what proof can I give the seigneur that I speak the truth?" asked Pierre, plaintively.

"Here, take my hat, Pierre," I replied, "and I will take yours. You can show that as evidence of the truth of what you say and that you really found me."

He thought a moment, and then said, "I will do it, but monsieur will lose by the exchange; my hat is but a poor one."

"You object to beatin' him in a hat swap," said Zeb, "but you tried mighty hard awhile ago to put a bullet through his head."

"That is different," said Pierre, simply.

Then he put my hat on his head, handed me his own, turned and went back toward Quebec.

"He's done the best he knowed how," said Zeb, as we resumed our flight.

Feeling comparatively safe now, I took the time to ask Zeb how he had managed to come to the seigneur's house at such an opportune moment for me.

"I slipped into Quebec yesterday mornin', spyin' for the general," he said, "an' heard a Canadian say an American officer was a prisoner in the seigneur's house. I thought from his description that it might be you, and concluded to see. I took the chance, and found it was you. I stole that dingy old uniform you're wearin'."

"I thank you for taking the chance, Zeb," I said.

CHAPTER XXIII.

UNDER THE RIGHT FLAG AGAIN.

THE sun came out and the day grew very warm. Our tramp was long, and I became weary in the flesh, but not in the spirit. I was exultant over my escape, which seemed to me little short of the miraculous, and certainly would have been impossible without the aid of Zeb. The changing fortunes of the war also were sufficient to encourage a man who loved his country.

"Tell me about Wolfe, Zeb," I asked.

"He isn't very fine to look at," said Zeb. "I guess they didn't have an uglier man in England, but he's worth all the other generals they've sent over put together. But he's got his work cut out for him; there's no doubt about that."

I looked back at the spires rising above the mighty fortress they called Quebec, and I knew that Zeb spoke the truth. I had been there, and I had every right to know.

Zeb told me that my own regiment of the Royal Americans was with Wolfe, and the knowledge that I would soon grip the hands of my old comrades again added to my rejoicings.

The day grew hotter as the sun swung overhead. Far away toward the St. Lawrence the deep, heavy boom of the great guns echoed through the sultry air.

"I guess that comes from Point Levis," said Zeb. "The general took it an' planted there the batteries that are shellin' an' poundin' the city."

I trusted that neither shot nor shell, however well aimed at Quebec, would strike the Château de St. Maur. As we tramped on, the roar of the guns increased.

"I guess the ships are helpin' the batteries," said Zeb. "Let 'em fight; it's enough for you and me to do just now, leftenant, to keep out of the way of the Indians and the French skirmishers."

But we were lucky enough to escape all such individuals. We crossed the Montmorency without trouble and entered the camp of Wolfe, where I found my own regiment, and was welcomed as one from the dead. There, too, I found Culverhouse and Graham, and nearly all my old friends and acquaintances.

"Where is Spencer?" I asked of Culverhouse, after I had told my story.

"Over at Point Levis with the batteries," he replied; "and I might as well tell you, Charteris, that if he comes out of the campaign all right he will become your relative."

I guessed his meaning, but I asked for explanations.

"Spencer came suddenly into his title," he said, "and he at once pushed his fortunes with the pretty

Miss Arthur. He was successful, too, and they are to be married as soon as the campaign closes. It seems to be a fitting match, and the old merchant, her father, is hugely delighted."

"I shall offer my heartiest congratulations when I see him," I said.

"But our good Mr. Arthur used to give you some evil looks," said Culverhouse. "He seemed to think that you wished to be Spencer's rival."

I laughed. "Marion was my playmate and almost my sister," I said. "Spencer will be my brother-in-law, so to speak. I was never his rival."

"I thought so," said Culverhouse. "There's somebody else in Quebec, eh?"

"Yes," I replied; "Marion is a very fine girl, but I think I know a finer."

"Mlle. Louise de St. Maur?" said Culverhouse, bent upon pushing me to a declaration.

"Yes," I replied; "what have you to say?"

"Nothing," said he, "but to commend your taste."

Which made my heart warm towards Culverhouse.

But I had not much time for such talk, as I was soon summoned to the presence of General Wolfe, whom all men now call great, but who some then thought was mad. It was with deep curiosity that I came into his presence. My enthusiasm had caught fire from Zeb's own, and, despite Zeb's assertion that he was ugly, I expected to behold one whose manner and presence bespoke the hero. Never was anybody more disappointed at first glance than I. I stood before a man

who looked like some bedridden invalid more than a soldier. Thin, awkward, with sparse, red hair, weak mouth, and retreating chin, face seemed to combine with wasted form to point out the last man who should have been chosen commander of the army besieging Quebec. Only the bright, alert eye said "No" to their lies, and I in talk soon learned what others knew already—that England had sent over a real general at last.

I soon told him all that I knew about Quebec, the nature of my imprisonment there, and the manner of my escape. But of real information, such as would serve a besieging army, I had little to give. He asked me several questions about the Seigneur de St. Maur.

"I have heard of him," he said; "he has served in the great wars of Europe, and he was one of Montcalm's lieutenants at Ticonderoga. We will have to reckon with him here."

I was silent, but I was of his opinion that we would have to reckon with the Seigneur de St. Maur.

"You wish to rejoin your regiment, do you not, and serve in the siege?" asked the general.

I replied that I had not thought of anything else. He seemed pleased at my reply, and sent me back to my regiment.

As I left the tent a portly form approached me, and behold I was staring into the twinkling eyes of the good Mynheer Martin Groot.

"What, mynheer!" I exclaimed; "you here, where many a good blow is likely to be exchanged?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "The blows will not fall on me," he said. "I have taken care of myself for five and fifty years much better than any one else would have taken care of me, and I shall not forget how, even under the walls of Quebec. Lieutenant Charteris, quit this trade of fighting, that brings you blows, and join me in mine, that will bring you gold. Which would you have, the blows or the gold?"

"Thank you, Mynheer Martin, for the compliment and your kindness," I replied; "but for the present I will take my chance of the blows."

"The way of a young fool," he replied. "You have been in a French prison already, and you have probably got out just in time to have your head smashed by a French bullet."

"Even as it is, mynheer," I replied, "I would not have missed that French prison." I was thinking of Louise.

He looked puzzled, as he had a right to look, for how could he have understood my meaning?

"Doubtless it was better than the bullet will be," he said.

I waved my hand to him and left him.

The next day a detachment of our company was sent over to Point Levis to assist with the batteries. We crossed on one of the sloops, and from the middle of the river I beheld the great and thrilling panorama of the siege and defence of Quebec. It was a day of dazzling sunlight. Over there, between Quebec and the Montmorency, stretched the long lines of Montcalm,

a foe whom no man could afford to despise. With him were the victors of William Henry and Ticonderoga, veterans of France, sturdy Canadian backwoodsmen, and the Indian warriors, more to be dreaded in forest fight than either. Beyond Montcalm was Wolfe, a dying general, who wished to win this great cast before he fell, and with him were the best troops of Britain and our own enduring Americans. Now that we have quarrelled mortally and finally, the English, when they tell of the taking of Quebec, say nothing of us; but we were there, and we did our duty as hardily and as well as they. Canada is English to-day; but it is due as much to the valour of the Thirteen Colonies as to that of England. But enough of that. I have made my little boast, which is true.

The bombardment was proceeding in a fitful way. From Point Levis an occasional shot was sent on its mission. The ships joined now and then in the fire. The great river took up the echo of the guns and sent it far up and down the stream. Quebec, on its mighty fortress of rock, seemed to defy any and all enemies. In the brilliant sunshine, which made them as distinct and as clear as if they were within reach of my hand, I could see the spires of the cathedral and the Ursulines, and others I did not know. Between the stone houses showed strips of green that were trees, and beyond rose Cape Diamond tipped with fort and cannon. But everywhere in Quebec and around Quebec were batteries. Whichever way we looked we looked into the mouths of cannon.

Just over there, beyond that red roof, was the Château de St. Maur. I shuddered to think of my dear girl—for such I called her now—exposed to the shot and shell of the fleet and the batteries. Some in the city had been hit, and she was as likely as any other to become a victim.

We landed presently on the island, and I soon met Spencer. I gave him a hearty handshake, but he looked at me a little sheepishly. I knew what was passing in his mind, and I was quick to disabuse him.

"Spencer," said I, "I have heard already that you are to be my kinsman. I congratulate you most sincerely. There is not a finer girl in all the colonies."

Observe that I said "colonies." I made no mention of Canada.

My manner was such that he could have no doubt about me, and he seemed relieved.

"Spencer," I said, "let's forget all about that duel and be good friends."

"I'm willing, if you are," he said.

"Then shake," said I.

We gave each other a hearty grip again. Moreover, we kept our word and remained the best of friends.

I may add right here that Spencer came out of the campaign without a scratch, and at this very day is a most popular country gentleman in England, the model husband of a handsome wife, my third cousin, Marion Arthur that was.

I had but little to do on the Point, and I spent my time in looking and asking questions, and in putting

together what I saw and heard. I concluded that I was not willing to exchange my own place of lieutenant for that of General Wolfe. I believed that I could do what I would be told to do, but whether General Wolfe could take Quebec was another matter.

The long, warm day dragged on. The smoke from the great guns rose in white clouds and drifted with the idle winds. The ships spread their sails now and then, and moved to new points of vantage, but Quebec on her rock looked to me grim, defiant, and unassailable.

The river was a vast sheet of murmuring water, silver and green here in the shade of the rocks, gold and blue out there where the sunshine fell or the clouds were reflected. In the bright light the colours of Quebec's mighty mass of stone shifted and changed. Now there were creamy seams in the rugged rock, which soon turned to brown or grey, and the walls themselves, catching the light of the sun from new directions, changed their tints. The slender spires seemed to float in the soft sunshine.

The batteries of the French replied now and then to our own. A frigate sailed up toward the city and dropped into it a broadside from her twenty-four pounders. An answering flash and roar came from the rock, and I saw a spar on the ship fall. A moment later a group of men gathered on her deck, as if somebody had been hit and they were taking him away. The rock seemed to have the better of it, but the ship was true grit. She swung a little closer, and sent

another broadside into Quebec. A shower of balls was hurled at her, some hitting her, and then she drew off as if she had merely gone out to give a challenge.

"That sort of thing has been going on for days," said Spencer, "and it looks to me like a waste of good powder and ball. We don't make any progress, and the general is fretting away what little life disease has left him."

The next day I returned to the main camp, and was assigned to guard duty on our side of the Montmorency gorge. I soon discovered that this was no mean service, but required all the vigilance and alertness of which a man was capable, mingled with no small modicum of courage and presence of mind.

Between us and the French and their red allies was the vast gorge of the river. We beheld mighty precipices, their summits covered with green and brown-streaked forests, the stunted birch and fir clinging for life to their steep sides. Below boiled the Montmorency after its mighty plunge, sending up a column of foam and mist and spray, now white, now pale, its rainbow arching over it.

It was but a fair rifle-shot across the gulf, and I paid good heed to Zeb Crane's caution not to approach too close or to show too much of myself.

"The French an' Indians are good sharpshooters," he said. "They had enough practice at Duquesne an' Ticonderoga to make 'em good."

We clung to the shelter of the trees. Now and then a bullet would snip up a bit of grass and warn us not

to put our trust in the beauty of the weather. The river roared in our ears, but we paid small attention to its roaring. Instead we watched the green and brown woods and thickets on the other shore. Since the memorable experience of Culverhouse, Zeb Crane, and myself with the Hurons—memorable to me, at least—I thought I knew something about wilderness sharp-shooting, and I compressed all my knowledge into this: Lie close to the earth and keep a thick tree between you and the enemy.

This maxim I practised with assiduity and zeal.

I caught a glimpse now and then of a Frenchman in green or a red warrior leaping from one tree to another, but they were always too quick for me, and I could never get a shot. Once Zeb, who had crept up to a tree next to mine, fired, but he shook his head doubtfully, and said he feared that his bullet had gone wrong. Most of our men were New England Rangers, accustomed to bush fighting, and they seemed to enjoy this business. One stole through the grass quite close to the brink, but he paid the price of his folly. There was a dab of flame in the opposite woods, the sharp report of a rifle, and presently our ranger crawled painfully back to us, trailing a broken leg behind him.

Above the spiteful little spat of our rifles we heard the deep but distant boom of the big guns, reminding us that we were playing but a minor key in the great war song, though a half-ounce bullet can kill one quite as dead as a twenty-four-pound cannon ball.

The warm afternoon waned. The sunshine, with a

last burst of splendour to mark the setting of the sun, turned to the grey of coming night. The woods on the opposite shore became an indistinct mass, and the sharpshooters on either side were compelled to fire at random if they fired at all. I went off duty then, to sleep and resume guard at midnight.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A COMPROMISE.

"Wake up! wake up!" said Captain Stearns, the chief of our detachment, as he gave me a sound shake. "Here's a chance for active service."

Fifty in number, we moved further up the river to watch for the French skirmishers, who had been active for days in an effort to annoy us beyond endurance and break up our camp. I determined to keep a good watch, so far as my part was concerned, since I had no mind to leave my body in the forest, fallen in some petty skirmish. I wished for Zeb, who was an adept at such business, but they told me he had gone on a long scout behind the French army.

We took position in a bit of woods close to the river. The place seemed favourable. We had the river on one side of us and some open ground on the other. Here we began our long and tedious watch. I hate the hours between midnight and day, and I am never awake then if I can help it. But this time I could not help it, and I paced up and down the woods, listening and looking, but hearing nothing and seeing nothing of moment.

The fitful bombardment had ceased for the night. Towards Montcalm's camp and the city all was quiet, and our own army, too, seemed to be sleeping. I could only hear the plash of the river and the rustling of the leaves as the wind blew through them. These gentle noises were soothing, and they encouraged sleep. I had just awakened from one sound nap before coming on guard, but I longed for another. It was hard to fight off sleep, and I kept stirring that I might not be overcome.

"I think we've been sent too far up," said Captain Stearns, in a discontented tone, as we stood together near the edge of the wood. "It's no use to extend the lines so far."

I did not presume to dispute the words of my superior, but, having had some experience in bush warfare, I thought him wrong. We walked up and down together, noting the men, who seemed wakeful and alert. We approached the bank of the river, which at this point was not more than a pistol-shot across. The opposite shore was densely wooded with fir and birch, and formed an admirable covert from which the French could have picked us off had there been light enough to disclose our forms. Studying it intently, I could not see the slightest movements there, and I walked back to Captain Stearns, who had returned already to the other edge of the wood.

We whiled away the time in low talk or in rounds of inspection. The night had grown very dark, and at last I went back to the river again, though alone.

The trees on the other side were scarce visible. The water itself had turned a dark lead. In the silence and the darkness its steady plash had a louder sound. I listened to it a little while, and then I could have sworn that I heard another plash up the stream. Though not suspicious in itself, it was a new sound, and it attracted my attention. I approached the brink as closely as I dared, and listened. I heard the strange plash again and then again. I was confident that it was made by oars, and, looking up the stream, I seemed to see a dark shadow crossing its current. It was followed quickly by another.

I rushed in all haste to Captain Stearns, and told him what I had seen and heard. He gathered our force together hastily, and was not a minute too soon, for the forms of men seemed to rise from the grass, and a numerous body of the French charged directly upon us, firing their muskets and rifles, and shouting like savages, the latter to confuse and frighten us. It was, in truth, a most terrifying moment, the darkness, the half surprise, the shots, and the yelling numbing our senses for the moment.

But it was only for the moment. The captain had received a bullet in his left shoulder, but he was a brave man and not without presence of mind. He shouted to his men to spring behind the trees, and I added my shouts to his.

We sheltered ourselves, and poured a volley into the advancing French, which reduced their number and caused the others to hesitate. But they recovered

presently, and attempted to rush us again. This hesitation was their undoing, for some of our fastest men had reloaded their rifles and gave them a second volley, which turned their faces in the other direction. Evidently they had expected to surprise us, and were not prepared for such ready and effective resistance.

We were carried away by our success, and our men in their enthusiasm shouted to charge the retreating French. All of us took it up, and after them we went pellmell. They sent back at us many shots, a few of which hit, while most did not, but we continued our pursuit, making a good deal of noise, and encouraging each other to run faster.

I singled out one man who was borne away in the press of the fleeing Frenchmen, but who seemed to run with them most unwillingly, for often he shouted to them to stop, and struck one with the flat of a sword. I own that I was infected by the excitement of the chase, and I marked this man as my particular game. One who did not care to keep out of our way, and who was not willing to run as fast as other Frenchmen, ought to be captured.

Both sides fired in a scattering way, but the number of shots diminished as we ran, and the darkness and uncertainty of the ground made them ineffective. Both sides spread out, but I kept the tall officer in view, determined that he should not escape me. The ground was very rough, and I tumbled over once on my hands and knees, greatly to their damage, but my enthusiasm withstood it all. I was up again and in

hot and zealous pursuit of my man, who was endeavouring to stop two Frenchmen running by his side. But the two darted off into the bushes, and I saw them no more. When I looked around for my comrades, they too were gone. They had scattered in every direction after the scattering Frenchmen, and it was easy to lose sight of them in the night. My own particular Frenchman and myself held the field, so far as we were concerned.

Finding himself deserted by his comrades, he slackened his pace. He stepped lightly across a brook, still holding his sword in his hand, and then looking back for the first time since his men had left him, saw me in eager pursuit. I will admit, however, that my eagerness had diminished somewhat since the pursuing army, so far as my range of sight was concerned, was reduced to myself. Nevertheless I could not in honour turn back. So, holding my cocked pistol in my hand, I urged on the pursuit.

He looked back at me again, and then slowed down to a walk. He was a tall and large man, and seemed to be very athletic, but I reasoned that a loaded pistol is always better than a sword at the proper distance. As he was walking and I was running, I gained very fast, and I shouted to him to stop, waving my pistol in a very significant manner. Obedient to my command, he stopped and took a seat very composedly on a large boulder.

"You are my prisoner!" I said, rushing up to him.

"It might be possible for me to make you mine," he said; "but I am willing to discuss the matter with you."

The voice was familiar, and, looking more clearly, I recognized the large, calm features of the Seigneur Raymond de St. Maur.

I was astonished, but not altogether displeased.

"I was not expecting to see you," he said.

"Nor I you."

"But I am glad to see you nevertheless."

"And I to see you."

"My night attack has failed," said the seigneur, regretfully.

"I am sure it is no fault of yours," I said, feeling in a measure sorry for him.

"I might have made the attack on some other party had I known you were there," he said, with all a Frenchman's politeness.

"It has turned out very well as it is," I could not refrain from replying.

"Do you still regard me as your prisoner?" he asked, with a smile.

His question was somewhat perplexing. If my shot missed or wounded but slightly, he could chop me into little pieces with his long sword. Besides, I had no desire either to wound the father of Louise or to take him a prisoner into our camp.

"I have reconsidered the matter," I said at last; "I do not claim you."

"That is better," he said, with another smile, "because

I was of another opinion, and it would be a pity for two such good friends as you and I to disagree."

The risks of the encounter certainly looked large, and with those risks I salved my conscience.

"We will make a truce for the present," he said.

I was willing, and suggested that it would be wise for him to recross the Montmorency and rejoin Montcalm at once. He approved of the suggestion, and we walked together toward the river. I thought that I could protect him from our troopers should we meet any, while he could act in a similar capacity for me should we meet any of his.

"My compliments to Mlle. Louise, your daughter," I said as we walked along.

"She will be glad to hear that you are safe," he said gravely.

I did not venture any further upon that subject, and presently we heard the plash of the waters of the Montmorency.

"I think you have come far enough with me," said the seigneur. "I know how to recross in ease and safety, and in parting I desire to say that I wish you the best luck in the world, Lieutenant Charteris."

I wished him the same, and, shaking hands with mutual good will, we separated.

But as he left I put to him another question. "Did Pierre bring you my hat?" I asked.

"He did."

"Was the proof that he had done his duty sufficient?"

"It was. Pierre is a faithful fellow, and devoted to France."

Then his figure disappeared from my sight.

I returned to our original camp, and on my way met Captain Stearns, who was delighted with our success, despite his wound, which was slight. We had not suffered much in the skirmish, and soon got our men together in the grove, where we kept watch until day without further incident.

On the following afternoon, when I was on watch at the same post, we saw some one appear in the woods on the opposite bank holding up a small white flag. The figure of the man who held the flag seemed at the distance rotund and unmilitary, and we wondered what he wanted; but Captain Stearns, whom a little wound could not keep from duty, made a suitable reply to the signal, bidding him to come, and to state his message. He descended the bank, and climbed into a small canoe that had been hidden in the bushes. Then I saw that the messenger was my good and plump friend, Father Michel.

The good man did not seem to rush in any mad haste upon his errand. He paddled slowly, and cast many uneasy looks upon the woods that lined our side of the river. His little white flag he had stuck in the bow of his boat, where it could not fail to be conspicuous.

As I spoke French, I suggested to Captain Stearns that I descend the chalk cliff, and meet the father. He agreed, and I scrambled down. When Father Michel

saw me standing ready to receive him his round, rosy face was illumined with joy.

"I am happy to see you, Lieutenant Charteris!" he cried. "I feared that you would not be here."

"The joy is mine to see you, Father Michel," I said. "Nothing but an errand of good could bring you here."

"I don't know whether the seigneur would call it good or not if he heard of it," he said doubtfully. "But are you sure none of your sharpshooters are aiming at me from the wood, up there? It seems to me I see a gun-muzzle. Remember that my profession is the Church, and not arms."

I assured the good man that nobody would shoot at him while he was under the protection of the white flag, and he paddled to shore.

"Mlle. de St. Maur has heard of the encounter you had with her father," he said, "and she sends you this note."

He handed me a little envelope, which I opened in haste and eagerness, reading upon a piece of paper this line, "I am grateful," and signed "Louise"—just Louise, not a formal "Louise de St. Maur."

I was tempted to kiss it, but that would have been ridiculous in such a place. Moreover, Stearns just then came stumbling down the hillside, and wanted to know what was in the note. He was within his right, and I showed it to him. He grinned.

"That's a love letter, Charteris," he said.

He gave Father Michel a sly smile, and the priest

returned it in the same sly fashion. But Stearns was a good fellow.

"Put it in your pocket, Charteris," he said, "and we'll say no more about your treasonable correspondence with the enemy."

I did as I was bid, and he was gentleman enough not to allude to the letter again.

"I'll go now," said Father Michel, "though I am not sure of the seigneur if he should find out what I have done."

I encouraged him, telling him that the seigneur would know nothing about it, and in good spirits he climbed back into his canoe, but gave us a parting injunction to restrain our sharpshooters.

We watched him drag himself painfully up the further cliff, and disappear among the woods.

Good Father Michel, you were a brave man and a wise one!

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BATTLE OF MONTMORENCY.

THOUGH we skirmished somewhere almost daily, the siege dragged. The French had more men than we, and their positions seemed impregnable. Our only advantage was in our ships, some of which had run past Quebec with but little damage. The days were warm and long, the sunshine dazzling. From time to time came the boom of the great guns, and the clouds of smoke drifted over and around Quebec, but the mighty rock still defied us. Montcalm, patient and alert, lay in his strong positions along the Beauport shore, and would not come out and fight us. Some of the desponding said the winter would come and force us to retreat, nothing done. I feared that our failure to make progress would add to the general's fever, and it seemed to me to be a hard jest of fate that our first real general should be a dying man.

We destroyed some of their fire-ships, and rejoiced a little over the success. But I was prepared to settle back again into dull waiting, when my company was ordered to get itself ready for active service. We were then at Point Levis, and from the manners of the

superior officers I judged that the duty was to be both important and dangerous. Culverhouse was there also. He shook hands with me, and his face was very grave when he said—

"I don't know whether you'll come back, Charteris, and I'll bid you good-bye in case you don't. You'll have hot work over there, and my regiment is not to go."

He pointed in the direction of the camp where Montcalm lay behind his breastworks, so snug and so patient. Culverhouse knew that some sort of a general attack was intended, but that was all he could tell me. Our commanding officer himself even told me as much, but no more. We made ready for embarkation, as our part of the army could reach the enemy by water only. Then we waited.

Another clear and brilliant day had begun. There was the tightening of belts and the shuffling of impatient feet on the sand. I put my hands over my eyes to shade them from the glare of the sun on the water. I eased my collar, and made myself as comfortable as I could, for we might have long to wait.

But out in the river there was a beginning already. A big sixty-four-gun ship and two smaller vessels were hovering near the Montmorency redoubt. Presently they anchored, and across the river came a flash and roar as one of the smaller vessels fired a broadside into the French redoubt. The preliminaries were but few. The redoubt replied, and all three ships swinging at their anchors poured in broadside after broadside. Beyond the Montmorency another battery of ours—

forty great guns it had, they said—opened upon the flank of the French works.

The crash of so many cannon made the most tremendous noise I had ever heard, and I had been at Ticonderoga. Vast clouds of smoke gathered swiftly. Sometimes the smoke drifted about the ships and hid them. Then, driven by counter currents of wind, it floated and hung over the French redoubt and the English battery on shore. Through these shifting pillars and columns came the blaze of the great guns.

The cannonading was so steady that the roar of it was almost unbroken. Usually an artillery fire rises and falls, dropping to nothing sometimes, and then bursting out with a crash fit to split your ears. But this was a deep, fierce roar that turned your voice to a whisper and set everything in your head to humming. The clouds of smoke by-and-by drifted down the river and hung over Quebec itself. Others floated away to the southern shore and went out of sight beyond the horizon.

I was standing beside Lieutenant Peyton, of our Royal Americans.

"Is the general trying to batter the French out of their dens?" I asked.

"Partly, maybe," he said; "but all that firing is for another purpose too. It's to be the mask for our real attack. You and I will see it, my boy."

The bombardment went on undiminished. I was watching for the flash of the guns through the smoke, when I noticed the sailors bringing the long boats up

to the beach at our feet. I guessed that we were going to attack the French redoubt at Montmorency, and so did all the soldiers, but the full plan was still a secret. About an hour before noon we embarked in the boats and pulled out into the river. We thought then that the time for action had come at last, and the men were passing the word to each other, some in solemnity, and some in jest, for there are as many ways of looking at death as at life.

The firing kept my attention. Our approach seemed to have no effect upon it. The long, unbroken roar of the guns continued. The edge of the smoke reached out and surrounded us. The water glistened like silver scales as it fell off the oar-blades, and the steady murmur of the river as it flowed past our boats made a quiet song that all the crash of the cannon could not drown.

My mind instantly went back to Ticonderoga, which we had approached in a way as deliberate. But our bands were not playing now as then, and we were not in doubt lest the French would fail to meet us and run away. But our fleet of boats, filled with men who knew by deed what war was, made a fine and martial spectacle, and the French from the other shore must have admitted it.

We expected that we would row straight for the Montmorency redoubt, and the men were taking last looks at the arms and ammunition. Instead we rowed toward the Beauport Church, and then began to paddle about in the river like a swarm of uncertain ducks.

We wondered what it meant, and we had ample opportunity for wonderment, as noon came and we were still hovering off the shore. Up at the Montmorency it seemed, from the incessant pounding of the artillery, that they were fighting the battles of all the world, but we merely stewed in the boats. The sun overhead marked noon, and his vertical rays opened all our pores. A smell of hot leather and sweating flesh arose. The men swore softly in unison, and the officers pretended not to hear. But that was all. Around and around we swung like pawns moved by the master hand, uncertain upon what spot to place us. It grew so monotonous, that despite the roar, the smoke, and the anxiety I believe I could have gone to sleep in the boat had I tried.

It was easy to see that our general was seeking to mislead the French and conceal his point of attack, but that was a hard thing to do, for Montcalm was a wily old fox, and I for one thought we ought to set about doing whatever we intended to do. But the afternoon dragged on, seemingly without end, and we were still there in the boats, with the hot sun blistering above us and the hot river blistering below us.

"Phew!" said Lieutenant Peyton, wiping the reeking sweat off his brow with his forefinger, "if this lasts much longer, I shall be burnt to a coal."

"The waiting may last, but not the sunshine," I said, pointing to the south-west, where I saw a little black cloud rising like a signal.

"That will mean rain," said Peyton, "if it keeps on

growing, but I don't think it will strike us before nightfall, and we can hardly intend to wait until then."

There was more of the long waiting. The smell of leather and flesh became a little stronger, and the cursing grew a little louder. But the end of it came at last. Between five and six of the clock, when the tide was out, we rowed swiftly toward the flats of mud left uncovered before the French redoubt. That was the signal for all the batteries to do their best, and all the swearing was lost in the noise now. The sixty-four-gun ship and its two smaller comrades opened with every gun that would bear. Across the Montmorency the batteries thundered, and from distant Point Levis came the seconding roar. Nor were the French idle; their great guns were as busy as ours.

Amid the tremendous uproar and turmoil not even the steadiest could withstand excitement. My blood danced in my veins and pricked me as if there were salt in it. We leaped out of the boats, some half miring in the mud, and others falling over other soldiers. But all picked themselves up again or pulled their feet from the mud and pushed forward, shouting and cursing. In our eagerness we threw ourselves into disorder, but as we came out of the mud we made some kind of formation again.

We caught glimpses of a heavy red column a mile away advancing across the foot of the Montmorency, and we sent up a mighty cheer at this distant sight of our brethren coming to help us. Some raindrops fell upon my face, and were cool to the touch; the skies

were turning dark, but I thought little of those things, though I did not fail to remember them.

The grenadiers were in front of us. Suddenly they raised another tremendous shout, and, not waiting for orders, rushed upon the French redoubt. In an instant we seconded the cry and rushed with them. The French defenders of the works fired a volley at us, which made some holes in our ranks, but put no check upon our speed. Into the redoubt we poured like a flood, and the Frenchmen, still firing scattering shots, abandoned it and scuttled like hares up the steep grassy slopes beyond.

We uttered cheers of triumph as we seized the captured cannon, but our cheers were cut short. From the heights above us, which in one brief instant we saw were swarming with the French army, a storm of cannon and musket balls were hurled upon us. Far to the right and to the left the crest and upper slopes burst into a continuous and vivid blaze.

The groans and shrieks that arose from our ranks as we were potted like grouse was awful, but it was only for a moment. Then, as if by one impulse, we rushed toward the slopes. The leaden storm did not slacken. The smoke floated sometimes in our faces, but when it was driven away by the flash of the cannon and the rifles we could see the French in their white uniforms loading and firing, and above the roar we could hear them shouting: "Vive le Roi!" "Vive Montcalm!" "Vive notre général!" "Vive la France!"

We reached the slopes and tried to rush up them.

Cannon-balls, musket-balls, and buckshot beat us back again. Dead bodies rolled down and tripped us up. I remembered groaning and crying out, "Ticonderoga over again! Ticonderoga over again!" though I dare say none heard me.

Suddenly there was a great crash overhead, followed by a searing blaze. I looked up, and saw that the thunder was real thunder and the blaze real lightning. The skies were darkened by clouds as well as smoke, and while we fought and screamed on the slopes the clouds burst and torrents of rain fell upon us.

I believe that few in that moment knew of the storm. There was no decrease in the screaming, the cursing, and the firing. A terrible steam arose, the mingled reek of blood and muddy water. Streams of both flowed down the slopes and splashed our boots with red or brown. The grass became slippery as ice, and often we shot like cannon-balls back down the slope, though untouched by wound or fear. I thought I had reached the climax of horrors at Ticonderoga, but the sight was even more dreadful here. Over our heads the storm raged, and the torrents of rain pelted us. From the slopes and the cliff tops the French beat us down with an unceasing shower of lead. Below we struggled in the bloody mire, climbed a little way up the grassy slopes, wet and treacherous, then tumbled back again, a mingled mass of living, hurt, and dead. I think I wept at the fate of men trapped as I had seen them trapped before. At any rate, I found afterward white streaks down my begrimed face.

The storm and the battle seemed to compete, but the storm won at last. The French say it saved us from destruction; we say it saved them by making the grassy slopes as smooth as ice and impossible for us to climb. But the torrents of rain began to soak through the ammunition of both, and the powder would burn and explode no longer. The discharge of artillery and rifles died like a fire that has nothing to feed on. The trumpets sounded the recall, and, groaning and cursing, we dragged ourselves out of the sticky mire of mud and blood and water. The French had won again, and all the brave men who had fallen had fallen for nothing, unless to show that they were brave.

The rain, as if satisfied with its triumph over the powder, ceased to fall. The clouds disappeared. The last big drops of water glistened on the grass like silver dried up.

We drew off, sullen and still full of fight, though knowing how useless it was. The French began to shout again for their King, their general, and France, and the savages in their employ rushed down the slopes after scalps.

Then I noticed that we had not brought off all the wounded; the brave Peyton was hurt, and I saw him propped upon his elbow in the mud. A half-dozen savages were rushing toward him. I believe they prefer the scalp of a wounded to that of a dead man. Peyton had a double-barrelled gun in his hands, and he fired one barrel and then the other. An Indian dropped at each shot. But the poor fellow had no more shots, and

the remaining Indians came on as zealous as ever for scalps.

I ran back toward Peyton, shouting to my comrades to come also, but a Highland sergeant, a big red-haired, bare-legged fellow, was ahead of me. He seized Peyton in his powerful arms and took him in safety to the boats, carrying him and dragging him a full half-mile through the mud. Other such incidents I witnessed on that day. Even in battle men do not forget all human feeling.

We retired in better order than we had advanced. Our ranks were closed up, and we kept the muzzles of our guns toward the enemy. But they knew enough to stay in their works and on the hilltops and slopes. Only the skirmishers and the savages prowled about the battle-field.

The Indians kept up a frightful yelling, and the French, too, on the heights, shouted with might and main. The column which had come from beyond the Montmorency retired toward its old position. The bare-legged, striped, and kilted Highlanders, with General Wolfe himself among them, placed themselves in the rear of the retiring body, and suddenly we heard a fresh note amid the yelling of the savages; it was the Scotch bagpipe screaming defiance, and I verily believe those savages, to whom the sound was new, thought it was the war-whoop of the Scotchmen, and that at last they had found men who could emit more blood-curdling and unearthly shrieks than themselves.

The retiring British snatched off their hats, waved

them defiantly at the French, and dared them to come down and fight. But the French merely continued to utter their triumphant shouts and stayed where they were. If the French had been as prodigal and foolishly wasteful of their blood as we were of ours, they would have been beaten much earlier in that war.

We by the boats or in them seconded the defiant cheer of our comrades, but we were not quite so hearty in the utterance of it. Their part of the fight had been but little; it was we who had been torn and wounded on the slippery slopes, and, though we kept a line of bayonets and muskets between us and the skirmishers, and preserved all the appearances of activity in the face of the enemy, we crept painfully and down-heartedly into the boats.

It is not cheerful to know that you have left so many dead comrades behind you, and that you have so many others scarce alive groaning in pain beside you. We had been cut up most frightfully, and nothing gained. For the moment I feared that General Wolfe was like all the other generals. Truly the English owe very little to their generals and much to their soldiers.

The storm had cooled the air, but for a little while only. The hot twilight was gathering, and our wounded men burned with fever. Many of us took off our hats and, lifting water from the river, poured it over them. We rowed slowly toward the Point of Orleans, leaving the Indians shrieking and yelling on the beach. When we had gone some distance a warrior came down on a mud spit as near as he could to us and began to

whoop and dance about as if mad. I noticed something in his hand, and recognized a fresh and bloody scalp, which he began to whirl about as a taunt to us. I turned away my eyes in repulsion and horror. Then I felt something cold and hard laid across my shoulder.

"Sit still, lieutenant!" said a man behind me. "I'm just using your shoulder as a rest, and I won't hurt you."

We had taken into our boat a New England Ranger, a New Hampshire man named Cook, and it was he who was speaking. The long, slender blue barrel of his rifle rested upon my shoulder and projected half a yard beyond my face. I remained perfectly steady and with every muscle set. The hammer of the gun fell, a jet of fire leaped from the muzzle, and then followed the sharp report of the woodsman's rifle, which has been compared so aptly to the cracking of a whip.

The warrior fell prone in the mud and moved no more. It was the longest shot I had ever seen. Cook took his rifle from my shoulder with a satisfied grunt, and the men in the boats cheered.

We resumed our rowing, and in the growing twilight unloaded our maimed cargoes at the Point of Orleans. As at Ticonderoga, I had come out of this battle unhurt, and therefore had much reason to be thankful, but I passed a gloomy night nevertheless. It seemed as if after all our efforts and frightful losses the French would continue to beat us and keep us out of Quebec. The next morning I found that this despondency was shared by all with whom I came in contact, and I heard

that the general himself was in despair, increased by his failure to hear anything definite from Amherst, who was to come by the way of Ticonderoga and Lake Champlain with an army to our relief.

Then we entered upon a military course which may have been necessary, but which seemed very cruel to me, and which I yet think of with shame. We began to ravage the country with bodies of light infantry, Highlanders, and rangers. Some of them, especially the Highlanders, who, I understand, make a practice of it in their own country even in times of peace, were very expert at it. All the cattle were seized, the country people were driven from their homes, and if they resisted, stables, houses, and villages were burned to the ground. Sometimes a church was not spared. It was our general's object by destroying the extremities to weaken so far as possible the heart, which was Quebec. It may have been good military policy, but I repeat that it seemed very cruel to me. I witnessed many pitiful scenes while we were waging this war on women and old men and children, but the English and Scotch often make a jest of it. Whatever may be our faults, and whatever we may lack, I have always felt that we of America are more humane than the Europeans, and to my mind that is one of the greatest of the virtues.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A RACE FOR A RESCUE.

SOME days after our repulse at Montmorency Zeb Crane hunted me up on the Isle of Orleans, where I had returned after an up-the-river expedition.

The strange boy had been in Quebec ever since the battle. He seemed to pass and repass the gates with ease, having found better ways for coming out since he and I made the venture together.

"The French are making a great noise over their victory, leftenant," said Zeb, "and pretend to think this Quebec business is all over. Vaudreuil, the governor, has told his friends that they need feel no more anxiety, and that if General Wolfe should attack again he'd find a welcome still warmer than he had at Montmorency."

"Did you see anything of our friends the de St. Maurs, Zeb?" I asked.

"Your friends, you mean," said Zeb, with a sly grin.

"Put it that way, if you wish," I replied.

"I haven't seen anything of 'em," said Zeb; "but I

saw a fat friend of theirs, and I let him know I was a friend of yours."

"Father Michel?" I asked.

"He was a priest, and that was his name," replied Zeb; "an' because I saw him and talked with him is the reason I've come to see you. He gave me this letter for you."

He handed me a note from Father Michel. It was brief, but it excited and alarmed me. It said: "Louise is at the de St. Maur manor house. Savaignan with others has followed her. Go there if you can." The priest had wisely left it unsigned.

I held the letter in my hand for a few moments considering. That Savaignan would offer harm to Louise, perhaps kidnap her, I did not doubt, but in a very few minutes I formed my plan to rescue her. I reported to my commanding officer that a party of French had gone to the de St. Maur manor house up the river, and showed Zeb, who was a well-known scout and spy, as proof that my information was correct. I asked leave to take Zeb and some rangers and cut off the French. As this was directly in line with our policy, the leave was granted instantly, and we set off without delay.

I was able to procure but a dozen men on such hurried notice, but I trusted that they would prove sufficient. They were a good, sound, hardy lot, nine New Englanders and three New Yorkers, all dressed in green to match the foliage of the forests, though the splashes of brown in the leaves were now increasing

fast. In addition, there was Zeb, who was often worth a detachment, and myself, making fourteen in all. It was not likely that Savaignan had a large party, and I thought we would be able to take care of both him and his men if we arrived in time. If in time was what alarmed me. But Zeb had left Quebec with his letter only that morning, and I was hopeful.

We were lucky enough to get passage on one of our ships, which was preparing at that very moment to run the batteries and pass beyond the town, and with my little troop I embarked. I had seen this risky act done twice, but I had not taken part in it before. Nevertheless, we sailed past without any damage except some holes in our rigging, a smashed spar or two, and one sailor slightly wounded, though the French burned a deal of powder and fired many good cannon-ball into the uncomplaining air.

We landed above the town beyond the French lines, the ship going no further, and the rest of the journey we would be compelled to make on foot. But this we did not dread, as men who are accustomed to forests learn to walk with the speed and endurance almost of horses. Moreover, my men were well provided with zeal, for I held before them the possibility of some rich plunder, always a temptation to rangers. I thought that for the sake of Louise's safety I might be pardoned the confiscation of a few articles at the château.

The sun was setting, but we pressed on at speed, sometimes in the forests and sometimes in the open.

Despite our haste, we kept a good watch and guarded against surprise—a most useful precaution, for we might at any moment encounter a band of French or Indians. I had taken careful note of the way when I returned from the manor house with Father Michel, and I recognized several landmarks. So I felt easy on that point, and our rapid progress made me very hopeful.

The chief of my rangers, excepting Zeb Crane, of course, was that very Ephraim Cook, the New Hampshire man, who had used my shoulder when in the boat as a rest for his rifle. By his advice and Zeb's, we stopped just after dark and ate heartily of our rations. Then we resumed our journey. The coolness of the night was very favourable to walking, and we made admirable time. Twice we passed ruined and deserted farmhouses. So far as we could see in the moonlight and in our hurried passage, they had been stripped clean. Not even a chicken was left to pick worms in the deserted fields.

But oftener we were in the woods. Here we dropped naturally into the Indian mode of walking in single file, Zeb or Cook or myself by turns leading. We were so silent that we were like a procession of ghosts passing through the forest, and we made but little more noise. Shortly after midnight we stopped to eat and rest a little more, for in case of a skirmish or other encounter at the house we would need all our strength. Then we resumed our ghostly procession. I was not so well trained to such business as the others, but I had more

at stake, and that fact kept me on an equality of strength with them.

It was scarcely possible for us to go wrong in the night. I knew the house was near the river, and to that we could always come back. There was the road along which Father Michel and I had driven, but it did not follow a direct enough course for us.

Midnight came and then the small hours, which are so long. Trees and rocks assumed the ghostly quality which two or three o'clock in the morning imparts. A sharp chill was in the air, but our vigorous walking kept us warm. The daylight was at hand when I saw a strip of roof appearing above a low hill. I knew that strip of roof belonged to the seigneur's barn, for I had noticed it when Father Michel and I came away. I encouraged my men with the news that we had almost reached our destination, and we hurried towards the lower hill. When we reached its crest we saw the indistinct mass of the manor house in an opening beyond. A thin and lazy coil of smoke arose, and in the grey light of the early dawn the place appeared to be peaceful and sleeping. In a small enclosure stood a spotted cow looking at us with calm eyes. Nowhere was there a sign of disturbance, and my spirits went away up, for I was sure that we had arrived in time.

The manor house was a square, massive structure of hewn logs, much like the blockhouses on our own frontier, and, as I have noted before, used in the beginning for the same purpose. In those early days the woods had been cleared away beyond rifle-shot of the

house, that they might not offer ambush to enemies, but they had since grown up somewhat. A half-dozen low outhouses were scattered about in helter-skelter fashion. We stood for a few moments on the hill. I was studying how I should reward my little army, which I had promised plunder. I changed my mind about the latter, and decided that I would pay them out of my own pocket, which was tolerably well filled with English gold. I gave the word to advance, and forward we went.

We were winding our way through the new growth of forest, which as yet consisted but of saplings, when I jumped almost a foot high at the report of a rifle from the other side of the house. A bullet giving out its alarming little hiss passed directly between Zeb Crane and me, and imbedded itself with a spat in the trunk of a sapling. The discharge of the rifle was followed in a second by another, and one of my men lost a nice little patch from the shoulder of his green coat.

Men trained like mine know what to do in such a case, and in about five seconds my army had whirled about and concealed itself in the most approved fashion in the woods or thickets. Two more shots while this brief operation was in progress hastened our retirement. I saw some smoke rising from the woods on the other side of the cleared ground, which assured me that the shots had come from that point and not from the house, as I had at first thought. Both Zeb and Eph were near me, and when I appealed to them for an explanation

of this ambush they agreed with a quickness and unanimity that showed they must be right.

"It's as simple as fallin' off a log," said Zeb. "Savaignan and his crowd got here at the same time we did, only they came up on the other side of the clearin'. They saw us first, and plunked away at us."

These seemed to me to be the facts of the case, and I built my plans upon them. After their sudden volley the French were quiet, lying hidden in their own patch of woods. The smoke from their shots drifted above the tree-tops and was dissipated in the growing light of the dawn. We could not see a rifle-barrel or the corner of a garment. The French had concealed themselves with the address of the savages, whose acts they had learned to practise so well.

Nobody seemed to be astir in the house. Its inmates apparently slumbered on, which could well be a fact, for unless some one was on guard it would take the report of a little cannon to penetrate those foot-thick log walls and reach sleepy ears. The roof was of red tiles, and the beams of the rising sun struck upon it, glanced away, and cast red splotches on the leaves of the adjacent forest. The lazy coil of smoke rising from a fire, left overnight, drifted away with the light wind. The spotted cow, aroused by the shots, came down to the end of her lot and looked through the bars with reproachful eyes.

I laid my plan before Zeb and Eph; it was to enter the house as quickly as possible, and then beat off Savaignan and his party.

"But how are you goin' to get in?" asked Zeb. "They're all sound asleep in the house. The door yonder is closed and barred. While we're tryin' to beat it in or to wake 'em up, or before they can open it, the French can pick us off as easy as shootin' at a mark."

I was forced to admit that Zeb had put the matter right. We would have to contrive some method of awakening the people in the house without exposing ourselves to the French fire. I sent out three or four skirmishers to protect our own party from attack while we were deliberating, and then we three, Zeb, Eph, and I, set about our task, which was none so easy.

We thought at first of making a direct attack upon Savaignan, but in forest warfare the chief danger is in the offensive. Moreover, we did not know the strength of the French party. Our doubts were resolved for us by an untoward event; I say untoward, but perhaps, after all, it was fortunate.

The big oaken door of the manor house was opened, and a face and figure appeared. It was the face and figure of old Pierre, the seigneur's loyal follower. He stood there a few seconds looking out, and some one in the French part of the woods fired a rifle. It was intended that the bullet should be Pierre's. It struck the facing of the doorway, causing some splinters to fly. Pierre was no fool, and proved it. He jumped back with a quickness worthy of a man thirty years younger and we heard the bang of the heavy door as it was slammed.

I could not understand why the French had fired at Pierre, unless it was because Savaignan thought the old fellow was in the way of his plans. It would be easy enough for an unscrupulous man to invent some plausible excuse for Pierre's taking off. But the shot was unfortunate for us, as Pierre would be sure to think it was some English raiding party, and not his countrymen, who had fired upon him.

"They'll be on guard in the house," said Cook. "It's that much gained at least."

"Perhaps Mlle. de St. Maur will come out to treat with the invaders," I said.

I had confided all the secrets of the expeditior to Cook, who was a trusty man.

"In that case she'll have two parties of invaders instead of one to treat with, and maybe we can make the better treaty," said Cook.

This was true. Our chance for a treaty was certainly as good as Savaignan's, and, if I knew Louise as I thought I did, perhaps a good deal better. But I was in great anxiety lest she should be exposed to a shot intended for some other. In five minutes the door was opened again and Louise herself appeared there. I intended to rise up and shout a caution to her, but Cook dragged me back.

"Keep still, lieutenant!" he said. "They are bound to see who it is, and they won't shoot."

I saw that he was right and remained quiet. Louise stood in the doorway gazing at the woods. I was too far away to perceive the look of wonder which must

have been on her face when she saw nothing but the peaceful woods and the dawn of a bright day.

She stood there looking about, apparently confident that her womanhood would protect her from such shots as had been aimed at Pierre. Then I saw some one emerge from the French part of the woods and walk toward her. It was Savaignan. He seemed to trust that the apparently peaceful nature of his errand would cause us to withhold our fire. Nor was the man deficient in bravery, as his coming to New York as a spy showed.

I took my resolution at once. Bidding Cook to keep the men quiet and watch us, I also sprang up and walked toward the house. Savaignan may have been surprised at my imitation of his proceeding, but he kept his countenance. Louise was bewildered, and she did not seek to conceal it. She stared at one and then at the other as we approached from opposite directions. She gave me a warm smile, which, I believe, would have been warmer had it not been for the presence of Savaignan. I took a look at the woods from which Savaignan had come, but could see nothing of his comrades.

"I wish you a happy morning, Mlle. de St. Maur; you appear with the dawn, and are as bright," I said in the courtliest manner I could muster. We talked in a rather lofty fashion in those days. I had determined that I would act as if I were in a drawing-room as long as peace was preserved.

"I am glad to see so gallant and generous an enemy

as you, Lieutenant Charteris," she said, smiling at me very brightly and giving me her hand.

This was poison to Savaignan, but he was not wanting in readiness. He, too, made the compliments of the morning, and in a high-flown French way likened the appearance of Mlle. de St. Maur to that of the sun which dimmed all else.

"Some one fired at my servant Pierre as he opened the door and missed him but a trifle," said Louise. "Do you know who was guilty of the crime, Captain Savaignan?"

"Certainly, mademoiselle," said Savaignan, with the bow of a courtier and the face of the father of lies. "Hidden in the woods yonder is a party of English robbers come upon their favourite pursuit of pillage. When Pierre opened the door one of them fired at him, and they would have murdered all of you had I not fortunately arrived just in time. Mademoiselle, I beseech you to commit yourself to our protection at once."

The precious scoundrel said it with a good face, and Louise looked reproachfully at me. I saw that I must be as ready as Savaignan.

"Mlle. de St. Maur," I said, "I am sorry to contradict Captain Savaignan in your presence, but it was one of his men, not mine, who fired at Pierre, and it is we who will save this house and its inmates from pillage and murder. The Frenchmen in the woods out there are a band of robbers and cutthroats, not regular soldiers. Mademoiselle, I beseech you to commit yourself to our protection at once."

Savaignan glanced at me. I edged around a bit, putting a corner of the house between me and his hidden marksmen. But I do not think I was in much danger of a shot. If any of the French had fired at me, my men would have brought down Savaignan at once, and he knew it, and his men knew it too.

"You do not seem to agree upon an important point, gentlemen," said Louise.

"I am a Frenchman, your countryman, and your betrothed. You can not go, mademoiselle, with the English, the enemies of your father and yourself," said Savaignan, putting his hand upon his heart in a manner smacking of the theatre.

"Mademoiselle," I said earnestly, "do not trust yourself in this man's hands. He is a villain, and he has come here for no good purpose."

I knew that Louise believed me, but I saw also the reason why she was in a quandary. Savaignan was a French officer, ostensibly in good standing, and she could not favour the English while he and his countrymen were present. She took the middle course.

"This is a peaceful house, occupied by noncombatants," she said, "and I will not admit either of you. Close the door, Marie!"

I saw the maid standing behind her, and when Louise stepped back the quick little Marie slammed the door and threw the heavy bar into place, as I could very well hear. But time enough had been left Louise to give me a quick glance of entreaty, which said as plain as speech, "Get out of danger at once."

That I proceeded to do, recognizing its necessity. "Good-bye, Savaignan!" I shouted, and I skipped off toward my own men. In my rapid flight I noticed that he was making a similar retreat toward his own quarter of the wood. One shot was fired at me, but a flying target at a good distance is hard to hit, and I reached the woods in safety. The shot was a signal for one to be sent after Savaignan, but he, too, was untouched, and in a minute previous conditions were restored—that is, the house was closed and locked on the non-combatants, and outside English and French were face to face, each keeping the other from his object.

It was a puzzling position, and I think Solomon himself would have found difficulty in telling us the right thing to do. I distrusted that old scamp Pierre. I feared that he would communicate with the French in some manner and let them into the house. That Louise herself would do so I never believed for a moment.

"It looks as if the girl intended to hold the house herself, don't it, captain? What do you intend to do?" asked Cook, when I rejoined my men.

"The French will lay siege to the house," I said. "We must beat them and then take the place."

My men were quite willing to undertake the job. War was their trade for the time. Moreover, in common with all the remainder of our army, they were smarting under the defeat at Montmorency, which the French rubbed into us by sending us insulting messages and sarcastic invitations to attack again.

Zeb did a little scouting, and returned with information that the French were about as numerous as ourselves, and that they had begun to edge up as if they meant to attack us. I suggested that we move around the circuit in the same direction and attack them from the rear, where we would most likely have the advantage of a surprise. This plan commended itself to Zeb and Cook, and we proceeded to put it into action.

The woods formed a complete circle around the house, near at some points, and distant at others. The trunks were sufficiently numerous and the foliage dense enough to conceal us, and we stepped with great caution to avoid noise. Cook and two others covered our rear, in order to keep us from being the overtaken and surprised party. Thus we proceeded, Zeb Crane leading, myself and the majority of the men following.

It was full day now, the sun having risen above the tree-tops, and was very bright. But it was a dense forest. The seigneur certainly would never have allowed it to grow up in this manner had he contemplated such a thing as a siege of his house.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MLLE. DE ST. MAUR'S PREFERENCE.

FORWARD we went, saying nothing, and preserving our formation. It was warm work, stepping on tiptoe and trying to look in three or four directions at once. I had a small sword, and I unbuckled it and took it in my hand to keep it from striking against the bushes and making a rattle that would attract the attention of the French. The other men carried their rifles in their hands ready for use.

"Do you see anything of them?" I whispered at length to Zeb Crane, who was just in front of me.

He shook his head, and turned a rather worried look upon me.

"I don't see 'em," he said, "but we ought to. We've been comin' pretty fast, an' it's time to catch sight of the back of some sneakin' Frenchman."

"Push on," I said; "we'll see them soon."

On Zeb went, and we followed close after. Presently we came around to the point from which we had started, but not a Frenchman did we see. I was perplexed. That Savaignan would withdraw was incredible, and we had kept near enough to the edge of the woods

to watch the open and be sure they had not gone into any of the outhouses.

I consulted the rear as well as the head of the column, and found that Cook, too, had seen nothing.

"I guess we'll find 'em just ahead of us," said Zeb.

So we pushed ahead with our second revolution around the manor house. At intervals of fifty yards or so we stopped to listen, but not a sound, except the rustling of the leaves before the slight puffs of wind, came to us. The house remained tightly closed, disclosing no sign of life save for the smoke. In the opening nothing stirred but the spotted cow, which seemed to know just where we were, and revolved around the lot as we revolved around the larger circle of the woods, always keeping her big, mild eyes fixed upon our position. She annoyed me. It was like acting as a spy for the enemy, but I had enough to do watching for Savaignan and his men without trying to shoot a spotted cow.

Our second revolution was complete, and still no Savaignan. I began to believe that after all the fellow had taken alarm, and left the field and the enterprise to us. But reflection showed that it was scarcely credible, for, as much as I disliked him, I did not believe that Savaignan was a coward.

So on we went with the third revolution, that confounded spotted cow revolving with us as if she were the hub of a wheel, and we the outer rim. This, too, was completed without result; and then Zeb, looking down at the ground, began to laugh.

"Why do you laugh?" I asked.

"Look at the grass and the leaves," said Zeb.

Even to my untrained eyes the trampled grass and leaves showed a well-defined trail.

"It means," said Zeb, still laughing, "that we've been pursuing them, and they've been pursuing us at equal speed, and that there's just the same stretch of ground between us now that there was when we started. See, we've been treadin' in each other's tracks over and over ag'in."

Beyond a doubt we had been chasing each other around the circle, just as the Frenchman and I, before Ticonderoga, had revolved on a smaller scale around a tree. But with Savaignan there could be no such peaceful ending.

We stopped a moment or two to deliberate, but our conference was broken up by a shout from Cook and the firing of his rifle. The Frenchmen had burst suddenly from the wood, and made a rush for the outhouse nearest the manor building. Cook's shot had been too hurried to do any damage, and all the Frenchmen reached the stout log structure in safety.

"That's what I call a flank movement, and it wasn't fair," said Zeb, in an aggrieved tone.

The stable was now as silent as the house. The Frenchmen were fortified against us, but I could not see that they had gained any great advantage. From the shelter of the stable they could keep us away from the house so long as the day lasted, but that was all. We might besiege them in their fort, and, by

cutting them off from food and water, compel them to surrender without great risk to ourselves.

On the whole, I was not dissatisfied with the situation.

I conferred with my lieutenants, Zeb and Cook, and we detailed six men as sharpshooters to cover all the sides of the stable. I had thought it possible to approach the house from the side opposite the stable, making the house itself serve as our shelter, but a little investigation showed that the plan would not do. The stable was a long building, and a rifleman at one end or the other could reach us when we came within a certain distance. The plan must be abandoned, the risks being too great, for these Frenchmen, who live the warlike life of the woods, become expert marksmen.

They appeared to be taking matters philosophically in the house. The volume of smoke from the stone chimney increased, as if Marie were cooking a substantial breakfast for Louise, Pierre, and whosoever else might be inside, if anybody. It was a well-provided house, as I knew from my own earlier occupancy, and I judged that they would lack nothing but fresh air, which one can dispense with for a short time in a pinch.

Another conference resulted in a determination to wait until night for active operations. We kept our six guards on the stable while the rest of us sought out the most comfortable spot in the woods beyond the range of our enemies and waited. It was dreary work.

Waiting always is. The sun ascended toward the centre of the heavens, and the close heat accumulated, thick and stifling, under the boughs. One speaks of the cool shade of the forest, but a dense forest often serves merely to hold the heat and keep the cool breezes away, until it becomes like a stove.

I leaned against a log, and at intervals wiped the sweat from my face. I would have preferred action, but I knew its great risks while the daylight lasted. We ate some dinner out of the supply we had brought with us, and then resumed the old task of waiting. House and stable were as still as the dead. Evidently Savaignan, too, was content to wait, and Louise had no choice but to do so, whether content or not. The long afternoon shortened, minute by minute, though they were clipped off the hours very slowly.

The slow minutes turned into slow hours, but even the last in time exhausted itself. The edge of the sun reached the edge of the forest, and then we beheld the advancing twilight. Night soon came, and woods, manor house, and stable were in darkness. It was time to carry out my plan, and we set about it. Leaving Cook in command of the men, Zeb and I slipped into the open ground toward the house. I thought that while the French were watching for an attack from us we might arrange to enter the house unobserved under cover of the darkness and take away the girls, leaving the matter of a fight with the French to be disposed of afterward.

Zeb and I advanced with the caution befitting the

occasion, both of us bent far over, that our figures might not be revealed. Zeb carried his rifle; I had sword and pistol. The house had several windows on the ground floor, all closed with heavy shutters. I was sure that Louise or Marie would be listening and watching at one or another of these, and I hoped that we would be able to attract their attention and secure an entrance. Once inside, whether or not we were able to get out again that night, we would have a great advantage.

We were halfway across the opening, and our enemy had not given the slightest evidence that he saw us. A few feet more and we would be beyond the range of any rifle from the stable where the French lay.

An unusually keen eye watching that particular point at that particular moment might see us, otherwise not. I felt some apprehension and a certain tremor at the idea of making myself an unprotected target for ambushed Frenchmen, but the point was passed in a few moments, and there was no rifle-shot, no sound whatever from the enemy.

I had marked a window which I could reach with my hand, and we hurried toward it.

We arrived at the window without interruption, and stood close to the house in its dark shadow. Looking back from that point toward the woods which we had left, I could see only a black blur, the darkness being great enough to obscure the outlines of tree-trunks. I felt satisfied that we were not observed, and, reaching

out, I tapped on the window-shutter with the butt of my sword.

Tap-tap, tap-tap! it sounded. In the dead stillness of the night the noise was fearfully distinct. There was no answer, and I was forced to repeat it, still without answer.

"Shake it, if you can," said Zeb, who stood a little further away, watching for an attack.

I pushed at the heavy shutter with my hands, and it gave a little, making a heavy rasping noise.

"Who's there?" asked some one in a whisper, audible through the little crack where two of the boards joined. I knew the voice was Louise's, and in the same whisper I answered that it was I, Edward Charteris, and I begged her for the sake of everything to open the window at once.

The window was opened, and Louise's face, pale in the dark, appeared. Marie looked over her shoulder, half frightened, half delighted. Without another word from me, without giving them time to think or ask questions, I seized the window sill, pulled myself up, and scrambled in, Zeb following close after me. Then we closed the window and barred it.

In a corner of the room a candle made a faint light. I glanced at Louise. Her face was still very pale, but I could see that I was welcome—ay! threefold welcome.

"I do not know what my father would say," she said, with an attempt at a jest and a laugh, "when he hears that I refused to admit the foes of France to his house by day, but let them in by night."

"There is ample reason for it," I said. "Savaignan is a blackguard and a robber and worse, and you know it, if your father does not."

"Yes, yes," she said hurriedly; "I fear that it is true; but what do you mean to do?"

"Zeb and I will carry you away with us," I said. "We have some honest men outside who will escort you in safety to the English camp, and then send you back into Quebec if you wish. If there is any question of your loyalty to France, you can say we took you by force; it would be the whitest of lies. At any rate, no harm would be done."

I felt what I said very deeply, and I knew that my manner and words impressed her. Again little Marie was my loyal second and ally.

"Yes, yes, mademoiselle!" she cried. "Monsieur speaks the truth; it is better for us to go, and escape those wolves outside who call themselves Frenchmen."

"I will trust you," said Louise to me. "Come, Marie, let us get our cloaks and Pierre and go."

She took the candle and led the way into the next room, Marie, Zeb, and I but a step behind her.

As I passed through the doorway I saw the light of another candle coming to meet us. It was held by the hands of Pierre, and beside him was Savaignan.

I think that they were as much surprised as we at the meeting. Louise uttered a low cry; Pierre nearly let the candle drop. We stood for a moment or two staring at each other. All of us, except Pierre and the girls, had arms in our hands. Savaignan, with the

natural quickness of a Frenchman, was the first to speak.

"There is more than one window to the house, and more than one man to enter, mademoiselle and monsieur," he said, with a satirical glance at Louise and then at me.

"Yes, and more than one person to admit them," I said, looking at Pierre, for I was sure it was the implacable old wretch who had admitted Savaignan.

"We are French, and this is the home of a Frenchman," said Savaignan.

"It is English now," I replied, "for we have made a conquest of it."

We stood just as we were in the first moment after seeing each other, Louise and Pierre holding the candles, Marie crouching in fright near the wall, the others of us with our hands on our weapons. I was at a loss—never in my life at a greater loss. The presence of the women, our equal position, seemed to preclude a sudden combat.

Savaignan must have been affected in the same manner.

"Will you withdraw peaceably," he asked, "and leave the château and its people to us? We cannot turn a drawing-room into a slaughter-house, and in the presence of its mistress, too."

It was true that we were in the drawing-room. I had not noticed it before. There were rich rugs and furs on the floor, pictures on the walls, and all about the room those delicate articles of furniture

which women love. But I had no idea of withdrawing.

"I was about to make the same request of you," I said to Savaignan. "The lady does not trust you as a true and gallant Frenchman."

"Her father does," said Savaignan.

I made no reply. We remained as we were, neither side daring to make a movement. A little clock on the mantel ticked away most painfully. The situation was fast growing insupportable, but I saw no way out of it.

"Listen!" cried Marie.

The faint report of a rifle-shot came through the thick walls. I knew that the weapon must have been fired close by, to be heard by us at all.

A second and a third report, muffled like the first, came to our ears.

"I think your men and mine have met," said Savaignan.

"I think it very likely," I replied.

As proof of our surmises, rifles were then fired so rapidly that we could not count the shots. Yells and whoops, English and French, mingled with the volleys. Beyond a doubt my men and the French were matching their skill and courage in combat.

"I don't think there's any need of our fightin'," said Zeb, leaning his lank length against the door-jamb and making himself easy. "They'll settle it out there for us."

The sounds of the conflict continued. The men were

whooping and firing with great energy and like true rangers of the forest.

"As all of us are much interested in the result, perhaps we would like to hear better," said Savaignan.

"I am sure of it," I said, and, stepping to a window, I threw the heavy shutters open.

Instantly the noise of the conflict tripled. The shouts and the shots seemed to be almost in our ears, and the darkness added to the zeal of the combatants. Certainly a night conflict excels all others in noise. Firing in the darkness, it takes more shots to produce a result.

Accustomed as they had become to warfare and its alarms, the girls shuddered at the frightful uproar. Louise still held the candle. It might have been the part of gallantry for me to take it from her hand, but, as I was likely to need my own hands for some more serious purpose, I refrained.

The window was high above the floor, and any shot entering there would pass over our heads, but the conflict had moved around within its range, and we could see the flash of the rifles as the men fought almost muzzle to muzzle, it seemed. The French cries were shriller than ours, and, moreover, the two being in different tongues, I could distinguish them easily above the uproar. Savaignan had drawn a little nearer to the window, and was listening with the most eager, intent expression I ever saw on a man's face. Good cause he had too for his anxiety, as the result of the contest meant as much to him as to me or to any of us.

The centre of conflict began to shift. One side was yielding, and the battle would soon be decided. The blaze of the guns passed beyond the range of the window. Presently the firing itself began to diminish. I had known that this result must come soon. The combat was too fierce to last long. I listened intently to the shouting, that I might tell by it which side was winning.

The deep American cheer rose above the whoops of the French and soon submerged the sound of them. I could not repress a feeling of elation which must have showed on my face. Savaignan, as well as I, knew to which side the victory was inclining. The scattering fire outside ceased suddenly, was followed by a long triumphant shout, and then silence.

Savaignan was standing beside the window. With a quickness I could not anticipate, he dashed the candle from the old Canadian's hands and sprang toward Louise. I slashed at him with my sword, but I was too late. He seized Louise, and the candle, falling from her hand, sputtered still on the floor, but gave out so faint a light that we could scarce see each other's faces.

We were checkmated for the moment. Zeb, expert marksman though he was, dared not fire in the obscurity at Savaignan for fear of hitting Louise, whom the Frenchman held between himself and us.

"To the door, Pierre!" shouted Savaignan.

He dragged Louise toward the second door, the one through which they had entered. I sprang forward to interfere, but Pierre fired a pistol-ball at me, which

missed, though the flash of the powder blinded and stopped me for a few moments. Before I could recover or before Zeb, who was further away, could help, Savaignan and Pierre were through the door with Louise, and had slammed it in our faces. Little Marie stuck her head out of the window and shouted at the top of her voice—

"Help, Englishmen! For the love of Heaven and the Holy Virgin, help!"

I threw all my weight against the closed door, but they had locked it, and it withstood the impact. I heard a muffled sound like a shriek from Louise, and I was hot with rage and grief that Savaignan had outwitted me and secured such a hostage. Zeb dragged Marie from the window and shouted in her ear, asking if there were not another way to reach Savaignan. Marie, as I have said, was a girl of ready wit, and under Zeb's rough handling all her courage and presence of mind came back to her.

"Come through the hall!" she cried, dashing out at the first door.

We followed so closely that we were almost at her side. The rugs and furs had caught from the sputtering candle and were in a blaze, but we had no time to stop for such things. The hall was narrow, and made three or four turnings. At the last we heard the noise of footsteps above us.

"Up the stairway!" cried Marie. "They have gone to the second floor!"

We would probably have broken our heads or limbs

in the darkness had it not been for the brave little Marie, who knew the way. She dashed for the stairway, and we followed her dim figure in the half dusk. I took three steps at a bound, but stopped at the sight of Savaignan and Pierre at the head of the steps. The Frenchman held Louise by the waist. I could not see the expression of his face, but from the sound of his voice I judged that he had gone mad.

"If you come a step further," he cried, "I will kill her, I swear it, and then we will fight with you for the house afterward."

I believed that he meant it. The French are very hot of blood, and sometimes do strange, wild things. I shrank back, not willing that my own action should destroy the dear girl whom I was trying to save. Zeb, too, paused beside me, his fertile brain for once at a loss.

Our deliverance came from Louise herself. She was no milk-and-water girl, fainting at the sight of danger, but a brave woman, who seldom forgot the spirit of the race from which she sprang. Reaching up, she seized Savaignan's pistol with both hands and suddenly jerked it from him. He loosed his grasp of her waist and snatched at the weapon to regain it, but in a moment she had fled down the steps and was with us. Thence at my quick command she and Marie fled down the hall and were concealed by the last turn. Savaignan did not fire upon me. He had another pistol, and I wondered why he did not attempt to use it. His attitude was that of a listener. I, too, bent my ear,

and I heard the distant hum of encouraging cries and commands to hasten. I knew it was my faithful men clambering in at the open window to our rescue. Mingled with it was a steady though subdued roar, like the far-away sound of water pouring over a rock, that I did not recognize. My attention was distracted by these sounds; so must have been Zeb's, for Savaignan and Pierre turned and rushed into one of the rooms on the second floor. I sprang up two steps to follow them, but Zeb came after me and put a strong and restraining hand upon my arm.

"Look, leftenant!" he said, pulling me around and pointing down the hall.

A broad light flared even to the stairway, and the roar which had mystified me grew louder. The crackling of dry wood, and the shouts of my men calling to me and Zeb, mingled with it.

"The house is on fire," said Zeb, calmly. "We'd better let the Frenchmen go, and save them gals and ourselves."

At the turning Louise and Marie were waiting for us, somewhat frightened, but armed with presence of mind. The fire was feeding fast upon the dry timbers of the house. Smoke, lit here and there with sparks, was beginning to fly down the hall. I knew that the old house must soon go; all the result of one overturned candle.

"Come, I'll show the way," said my brave Louise. I seized her hand in the excitement of the moment, I suppose, and she led the way by another route to the

floor below, Zeb and Marie following. There the noise of the flames was louder, for one end of the house seemed to be all ablaze, but we came plump among my men, half lost in the mazes of the old French house, and shouting for me and Zeb. They welcomed us with a glad shout, but, not stopping for explanations, we ran to the nearest window, which we threw open, and all scrambled out with a sad loss of dignity but plenty of gladness.

When we stood on the ground fifty yards from the house, I was amazed at the extent to which the fire had grown in so short a space.

It was as light as day almost to the rim of the forest. The flames had eaten through the roof and shot far above it, discharging showers of sparks.

I sent men to the other side of the house, and ordered them not to fire on Savaignan and Pierre when they appeared, in case they offered to surrender. But as the fire spread with great rapidity to all parts of the house, the two Frenchmen, much to my surprise, did not appear.

"They ran up toward the roof," said Zeb, "an' the fire was below. Maybe they were cut off."

It was so. The faces of Savaignan and Pierre appeared at an opening in the roof. Then they climbed upon it, and stood a moment or two as if calculating the possibilities of escape. I think they would have risked the chances of the long drop to the ground, but with a great crash the roof, its supports eaten away by the fire, fell in, carrying the two Frenchmen with it.

The two girls withdrew from the sad sight, but some of us stood by until the last of the building fell, and only great heaps of embers remained where the manor house of St. Maur had stood. Beneath the charred fragments what was left of the bones of Savaignan and Pierre rested, and may rest to this day.

It was a melancholy fate. I had no cause to like Savaignan, but he possessed cunning and courage, neither of which had availed him anything in the end. His luck was bad and mine good, I suppose.

There was no work left for us to do, and I thought of returning at once with Louise and her maid to the camp before Quebec. But they were too much worn with excitement to start at once, and, in truth, all of us needed rest.

We left the remains of the house and moved a mile further up the river to a clearing, which was large enough to forbid ambush, and built a fire there, as the night was turning chilly. I persuaded Louise and Marie to lie down beside it and sleep.

Cook told me briefly that a few minutes after Zeb had gone into the house, he and his men unexpectedly met the French in the woods, into which they had slipped from the stable. A fierce combat, almost hand to hand, followed, in which the French were routed, their survivors fleeing with incredible speed. We had lost two men, and several more had wounds. I regretted my brave fellows, but had not time to mourn them long, and, as Zeb aptly remarked, the luck had been nearly all on our side.

We began the return next morning. It was slow, of necessity, as partisan bands abounded in the woods, and we had no wish just then for a further encounter with the French. I walked by the side of Louise for a while, and we had a chance to talk unheard by others.

I was troubled somewhat by the view the Seigneur de St. Maur might take of these affairs. He was the friend of Savaignan, and would be loath to believe that he had gone to the manor house with bad intentions. I expressed these doubts to Louise, but she brushed them aside, and said she would be able to prove the truth to her father.

"And I hope that then he will be able to think well of me in other respects, not merely as an honourable foe," I said.

"He surely will," she replied softly, with a blush.

Our further journey was without event. We passed around Quebec in safety, and, as my duty bade me, I reported that we had rescued two French ladies on our raid from some prowlers, and asked what to do with them. The reply was to send them into Quebec to their friends.

Fifteen or twenty others taken from the manor houses along the river were going at the same time. I bade Louise good-bye for a while. Her hand lingered in mine. Zeb was there, and, with the freedom of the backwoods, he chucked the brave little Marie under the chin. She gave him a smart blow on the cheek and called him an English bear, but Zeb did not seem to mind.

I had proof that Louise put the case well to her father, for in a few days the good Father Michel smuggled me a letter from the seigneur himself, in which he thanked me, and, with true French politeness, enlarged on the obligations of his family to me, hoping that the time would come when he could repay me. I hoped so too.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ON THE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM.

TIME began to lag again. The country was ravaged in an ever-widening circle, of which Quebec was the centre. There was a skirmish somewhere nearly every day, and our batteries which threatened the great rock were seldom silent. But all these things were mere smoke and noise. The real issue was Quebec, and we seemed to get no nearer a favourable result. Sickness devastated our camps, and it was reported two or three times that the general-in-chief was dying. Then came the news from below that we had taken Ticonderoga and Crown Point, that Niagara had fallen, and that Amherst with a powerful army was about to advance on Montreal. This was wine to us, and we pressed the siege with much vigour.

One night I saw our batteries on Point Levis set the lower town on fire. It was not the first time, but this night the blaze became a conflagration, and the flames rose far above the houses they were devouring. In their light Quebec and its rock became a great cone of red, pink on the outer edges, while above the area of light a black smoke-cloud gathered.

The glow of the flames fell in long red bars across the river, and the rigging of an English ship in the stream seemed touched with fire. It appeared to us from the violence of the fire and its duration that the whole lower town was burning, but the flames sank after a while, died out at last, and left river and city to their customary half darkness. We heard the next day that nearly two hundred houses had been burned. The unfortunate population of Quebec, and not the French army, had been the chief sufferers.

Our burst of enthusiasm at the report of Amherst's progress was soon dispelled by news that he was calmly enjoying his triumphs and was not advancing on Montreal, leaving us to carry on the war in Canada alone. We fell back into our old despondency, and it was increased by the reports that the illness of our general was gaining upon him. I had occasion once to carry dispatches to him, and I proved for myself the truth of these reports.

The general's headquarters were in an old French farmhouse in our camp at Montmorency. He lay in his bed in a room on the second floor, and his face was so pale, so thin, so drawn, that he looked to me like a man dying, only his eye was strong and bright. Yet the fires of a hero still burned in him, and with eagerness and wonderful pertinency he drew from me, as he did from all others who came before him, every scrap of information that I had to give.

Zeb made another successful trip into Quebec. He seemed to have established a sort of underground

system of communication with Father Michel, and brought me news that the seigneur was exultant, more confident than ever that the English would be sent scuttling out of Canada, but that mademoiselle his daughter was not so sure.

"She has a better opinion of the English, or some of 'em," said Zeb, with a familiarity which I tolerated on that occasion.

August passed, September came, and not much had happened, save that more of our ships had run the French batteries, and quite a brave fleet was anchored above the town. I was in the camp at Montmorency, and a lot of us were gathered in the shade of some tents. Culverhouse was there, and Spencer, now my very good friend, Graham, and others. We were discussing the campaign listlessly when the shadow of Martin Groot fell over us.

"Any fresh profits, Mynheer Groot?" I asked. He was well known to the others, too, as a patriot whose profits grew larger the longer the campaign lasted.

Martin took the gibe calmly. He looked at us a few moments with a pitying expression, then rejoined—

"None at present, but there are to be fresh blows for you, gentlemen; you might as well get ready for them."

They rallied him, and wanted to know when and where the blows were to be given, but they got nothing more from him, and he went away, leaving them in a state of unbelief. I had known him a long time, however, and, as I was aware of his shrewdness and his

possession of good sources of information, I was confident that some great operation was afoot.

My prevision was correct, for we broke up camp the next day at Montmorency, and took ship for Point Levis and the Point of Orleans. The French came down in strong force behind us to give us a scorching by way of a parting souvenir, but thought better of it when we turned to meet them.

Then followed a short period of great doubt to many of us, but soon we were gathered above the town for a decisive blow. Everybody seemed to feel that the end was coming—the end of the French power in Quebec or the end of our attempt to destroy it. Many of our heaviest batteries had been taken from their former resting places. The bombardment sank to nothing; the silence of the great guns and the anxiety on the faces of all seemed certain portents of a great attempt. The waning summer, the browning of the leaves, the increasing chill of the night air, too, told us it was time to do what we intended to do, or we would soon have a Quebec winter as well as the French to fight.

I shall not forget the many hours, the days even, we passed in the transports, so chock-full of red-coated soldiers that the air became heat to the lungs and a disgust to the nostrils. Down we drifted and back we sailed, and then down and back again, until we began to feel as if it was our duty to go for ever back and forth like the pendulum of a clock. The only humour in it to me was the sight of the French rushing up and down the rough cliffs, that they might meet us

wherever we attempted to land. I have no doubt that we were responsible for many a bruised French foot and ankle, and many an abused French oath. I saw one fat fellow—a sergeant, I think—in his eagerness to keep abreast of our ship, tumble into a gully, and it took two of his comrades to drag him out. But it was an anxious time for me nevertheless. Not alone was I concerned with the fate of the campaign—even a private will feel such an interest as that—but there were those in Quebec who were much in my mind too, and it hurts a man's nerves to be beset on either side by anxieties.

The night of the 12th of September came, and we were gathered in a fleet in the river, but we had a bigger fleet down below. We above the town knew that a decisive hour was at hand. When the dark came on a cannon from the fleet below thundered. It was followed by another and then another, and then the crash of whole broadsides, and river and shore echoed with the roar of the fleet's great guns.

But above the town we who were to do the real work lay in darkness and silence, while the mock combat below thundered and blazed, and Montcalm hurried his troops to the Beauport shore to meet the attack he expected there. While the sailors were expending the King's powder and ball at a tremendous rate, we waited till turn of tide, and at two o'clock in the morning I saw two lanterns go up to the maintop of the flagship. Then we climbed into our boats and embarked on our perilous venture. Down the broad river we went, a

silent procession. The stars were out, but the shores were in gloom.

The great river flowed on like the tide of the sea, the stillness broken only by the lap of its waters and the splashing of our oars. As the man next to me lifted his oar the water fell off it in huge scales of molten silver.

"Surely the French spies are abroad and are watching our movements," I said to Zeb, who sat in our boat.

"Guess they are," he replied; "but they don't know what kind of a fox chase we are on. They'll have to keep on watchin'."

We swung steadily on. My mind went back to Ticonderoga. But our advance was very different now. Then it was in broad daylight amid the crash of bands, and with the sunlight gleaming on sword and bayonet; now it was in the darkness and silence of the night. In which would we fare better?

We came presently to mighty cliffs, which flung their black shadows far over us.

"*Qui vive?*" called a French sentry. He was invisible, but his voice, sharp and clear, cut through the darkness.

"France," answered a Highland officer, in the boat just ahead of us.

"*A quel régiment?*" called the sentry.

"*De la Reine,*" called back the Highlander.

The Frenchman, believing us friends, and worn perhaps with long watching, asked no more, and we passed on. He had been a voice only and not a form

to us. Doubtless nobody will ever know who he was. The steady splash of our oars continued in the darkness. Looking back, I could trace the long line of boats for a distance, and then the end of it was lost in the dusk.

Again we were challenged by a French sentry, and again with ready answer we passed as Frenchmen. It was a kindly darkness that night, hiding our scarlet coats.

We rounded a headland and disembarked upon a strip of sand with as little noise as many men can make. Above us lowered the black cliffs, steep, but not too steep for agile men to climb, though the French never thought of an army coming up there, nor the English either until the last hour.

A call was made for volunteers, active men to lead the way up the cliffs into the blackness beyond. Zeb and I pressed forward, and a smart bunch of us, a score or more, began the steep and rough ascent. It was a task of honour, but not of ease. Bruises were plentiful, and we swore under our breath. We grasped at anything that could give support—bushes, briers, stones—and pulled ourselves up with slowness and pain. Above us we could see nothing but the cliff head, and we did not know what was waiting for us on the summit. The French might be there, ready to blow us with a storm of bullets back to the bottom, but that was one of the risks we had to take, though I will admit that it gave large and unpleasant liberties to the imagination.

Thus the night scramble proceeded. I looked back

and saw the uniforms of the men behind me showing through the darkness like a huge red smudge. There was a thump, and somebody cried, "The French!" But it was only a stone that an incautious soldier had set rolling. It continued to roll until it passed out of hearing, and for aught I know rolled on until it found the bottom of the river.

"If a little stone stirs us up like that, what would the whole French army do?" said Zeb.

"Let's not discuss what we don't wish to see just yet," I replied.

"I think I see the top of this pesky cliff," rejoined Zeb, "an' darned glad I'll be when we get there."

I expected momentarily to hear shots from above, but there was none. Only the exclamations and the scraping noises made by climbing men came to us. At last I seized a projecting stone and drew myself up the last foot of the steep. Zeb and I and two or three others stood together upon the summit of the cliff.

"I guess we're first up," said the lad; "but here are the boys comin' huddlin' after us."

Up they came, and the cliff soon had a red fringe where the little vanguard gathered.

In the faint light we saw a cluster of tents but a short distance away. We made a rush for them, and three or four scattering shots were fired at us. We saw some men springing out of the tents looking in the gloom like gigantic jumping-jacks. Somebody fired at one of the leaping figures and put a bullet through his heel, and an end to his flight at the same

time. He lay upon the ground groaning as much with fright as with pain, and when we came up to him we found it was Vergor, the commander of the post, who had been sleeping calmly in his tent when he should have been watching for us. We took some of his men, but the others fled so fast that we could not have caught them unless we had been winged.

Our shots were the happy signal to those below that the summit was ours, and directly the big red smudge of the red-breasted army climbing after us appeared on the edge of the cliff. I saw General Wolfe himself, and was near enough to mark the eager and joyful flush on his worn face. Presently we heard the boom of the cannon off Samos way. The French had found at last that the boats passing down the river in the darkness did not contain friends, and they opened fire upon the rear of the long file. But it was too late; the men from the other end of that file were on the heights, and despite cannon-fire and the precautions of the awakened French they were surely drawing the others up the heights after them. Some of our men were detailed to seize the nearest batteries, but I had no part in such expeditions. I remained with the steadily increasing army gathering in line of battle on the heights. Zeb had gone prowling off toward Quebec, and I had to do only that waiting which is so large a part of a soldier's work.

It was not yet day, and we who stood on the heights knew very little of what was passing. We could hear the distant cannon-shots and the whispered words of each other, but neither told us anything. We could

tell by the deepening hum and murmur that the numbers of our army on the heights were increasing, but what the French were preparing for us we could not say. We had performed one great feat and were exultant over it, but I confess that I was not sanguine even yet as to the chief event. I had seen two brave armies beaten by rashness and ill-judged attacks, and only by waiting could I know whether I was to see a third meet the same fate.

I strained my eyes in the direction of Quebec, but could see nothing. I tried to draw some sign from the distant cannon-shots, but remained in the same ignorance. A ghostly figure seemed to rise out of the ground at my feet, and Zeb Crane stood beside me.

"What have you learned, what do you know, Zeb?" I asked eagerly.

"Nothin' except what's good," he replied. "A peasant told me that Montcalm was still looking for us on the other side of the town."

Then he was gone to make his report to a colonel, and we continued to wait for the lazy day which to most of us seemed to linger as if it would never come. But come it did at last, though it was grey with clouds, gloomy, and threatening.

We were chill from the night and the damp of a cloudy morning, and the cheerless sight of a grey plain struck into the bone. The rising dawn revealed no enemies, but presently a body of Canadians came out of the town and moved along the strand to our landing-place. They were soon driven back, but the spatter of

the musketry and the shouts cleared our brains and stirred our blood until we felt like good men again.

Presently we marched in files to the Plains of Abraham, formed in line of battle there with our faces to Quebec, and waited for M. Montcalm to come and drive us off his doorstep, if he could.

At Ticonderoga and Montmorency it was we who made the rush and the French who waited for us; here it was we who waited.

Quebec was but a mile away, but still we could not see it. A third of that distance from us a broken ridge cut the line of vision and like a defiant wall shut off Quebec from us. I think most of us spent our time staring at the ugly ridge, and cursing it for getting in the way. I saw an old fellow dressed like a Canadian peasant appear on a hillock and gaze at us for a minute as if we were some huge and curious beast. Then he scuttled away to escape our skirmishers, and we did not see him again. The next moment, and before the other divisions could come up, we saw many white uniforms on the ridge, and I was certain then that the French army was coming at last to take breakfast with us. Nor was I wrong, for soon Montcalm came in tumult, in haste, and in disorder, as if surprised, as, in truth, he and his men were.

In our rear we heard the fire of the skirmishers, but in front we made no movement, content to hold for the present the ground we occupied and see what M. le Marquis intended to do about it. But we did not remain quiet. While the French were gathering on the

ridge and making their preparations, the Highlanders were waving their tartans and playing their strange, fearful music on the bagpipes. I do not think there is much music in it, but it goes well with the firing of guns and is suited to the expression of defiance. Certainly it inspired us, and our confidence grew.

Presently we had more than noise and the sight of white French uniforms. The bullets began to knock up dust, and then to smash through redcoats and draw redder blood. One man fell, and then another and another, and thus the roll continued, but we had to stand there, a huge red target for the sharpshooters, and no man knew that he would not be next. The fierce spatter of the rifle-fire seemed to ring us around. White puffs of smoke rose from a field of yellow corn where the Canadian and Indian sharpshooters lay. I fell to counting those puffs, but soon they grew too numerous for me and I gave it up. Then three cannon opened on us and made a great noise, though their sting was not any worse than that of the rifles. The sharpshooters in the corn-field were reinforced by others, and they lay behind every bush or hillock or stone that would give a man's body shelter. The army was bleeding fast, and it was no wonder it writhed about a little and wanted to bite back.

This lasted a long time—very long it must have seemed to some—and we had no choice but to endure it while we waited for M. Montcalm to give us open battle. Sometimes light showers of rain fell, but they were welcome to us, cooling our faces and settling the

dust kicked up by many men. Two hours before noon the French came down in full force to attack us.* They outnumbered us, but when I saw their tumultuous array I knew enough of war to feel sure that we would win. Order beats disorder. The French and Canadian veterans of many victories were there, but they were not fighting behind felled trees and earthworks now.

We went forward a little as if to welcome them, and they stopped quite still. The French came on with a gay air, shouting for France, their King, and their general, as is their wont. I saw a man in brilliant uniform on a black horse encouraging them, and I recognized Montcalm. But my eyes passed on to dwell longer on another figure as resplendently clad, but larger and more striking. It was the Seigneur de St. Maur. He, too, was on horseback leading on the Frenchmen. I had wished that he would not be there, but I knew that he would be.

The fire, still chiefly from the French, had grown very heavy, and the blaze of exploding gunpowder ran in streaks across the plain. But on our side it was only our skirmishers who were busy. In the solid red ranks the men, musket in hand, were waiting for the word of command. It did not come until the French were forty

* "Waiting no longer for more troops, Montcalm led the French army impetuously to the attack. The ill-disciplined companies broke by their precipitation and the unevenness of the ground, and fired by platoons without unity. Their adversaries, especially the Forty-third and Forty-seventh, where Monckton stood, of which *three men out of four were Americans*, received the shock with calmness."—Bancroft, vol. iii. p. 244, Little, Brown & Co.'s revised edition of 1879.

paces away, and then our line fired, all so close together that I heard but one explosion. It was a volley that scorched the Frenchman's whiskers and took most of the gaiety out of him. The whole French army staggered, the men behind us gave it another volley, and those who could reload followed it up with a fire as destructive as it was rapid. The smoke grew so dense that the French army was hid, and as if by preconcerted action our men stopped firing for a minute. The cloud of smoke rose up from the earth and left there a mass of dead and wounded men and horses, and guns and sabres, dropped from the hands of their owners. The French army, thrown back, hesitated and lost cohesion. The officers were shouting and cursing, and trying to bring the men up to the charge. The seigneur himself on foot, his horse slain, gesticulated with his bare sword.

Every man in our army who had eyes must have seen the opportunity, for by a common impulse we rushed upon the French in their disorder, the Highlanders drawing their swords and yelling in a manner only less fearful than the shriek of their bagpipes, the rest of us cheering, some firing, and others presenting the bayonet.

We struck the French, and in their disorder they were not fit to withstand such a red avalanche. Their ill-formed lines were smashed in, and on we went, over the wounded and the dead, sweeping everything in a wild rout before us. Montcalm, still on horseback, was carried in the blood-stained mob. I saw the seigneur brandishing his sword as if he had no other

business in life, and tears were running down his face. Then I lost sight of him.

We pressed on after this army, turned rabble, though the sharpshooters in the corn-field and the bushes still scorched our flanks. I heard a cry that the general was killed, and I saw two officers carrying him away in their arms. At another time it might have stopped us, but not then; the men saw their fleeing enemy, and we were in the flush of triumph. We rushed on, an invincible line, driving the French before us.

My head was clearer than ever before in battle. I looked again for the seigneur, but did not see him. I remembered to look also for my good friend Devizac, who I was sure would be there, but I missed him too. I saw Montcalm on his horse still trying to rally his army, but when the French mass, from which came many shouts and a straggling fire, was pressed back against the St. Louis gate, he reeled in his saddle. Two soldiers rushed forward, supported him on either side, and thus, a melancholy procession, they passed through the gate.

We were recalled to encamp upon the field of our victory and mourn the gallant men who had fallen, and who, alas! with our general-in-chief at their head, were too numerous. Scattered fighting still went on, but the bulk of us were busy with the spade, making good our hold upon the ground we had won.

Oppressed as I was with anxiety for my friends in Quebec, I was worn too with work, the battle, and long waiting, and when night came I fell asleep at the first

opportunity, and never slept more soundly in my life. In the chilly dawn Culverhouse pulled me out of the trench which was my bed, and shook me violently.

"Wake up!" he said. "You can't sleep for ever. A friend of yours and mine, too, that wild boy, is here to see you."

I opened my sleepy eyes and saw Zeb Crane. He had been in and out of Quebec again, and he said that the trip was easy in the confusion prevailing after the battle.

"Will they come out and fight us again?" I asked, for I knew the French were yet more numerous than the army that we had gathered on the Plains of Abraham.

"Hardly," said Zeb, scornfully. "The French are stampeded like a herd of deer with the wolves after 'em. Nearly all their army has left Quebec an' is runnin' full tilt for Montreal, with the governor himself leadin' 'em."

This was great news, and to my mind insured the fall of Quebec, which, in truth, turned out to be a fact.

"Has the Seigneur de St. Maur gone too," I asked, "or did he fall in the battle?"

"Neither," replied Zeb. "He wasn't hurt, and he's stayed with a few French to help hold the town against us if they can."

Then he added that Montcalm was dying of his wound, and the news came to us soon that he was dead. It is now an old tale to all the world how the two great commanders fell in this decisive battle, the one in victory and the other in defeat.

I mourned them both.

CHAPTER XXIX.

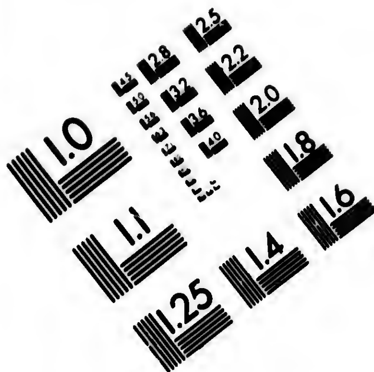
THE WILL OF GOD.

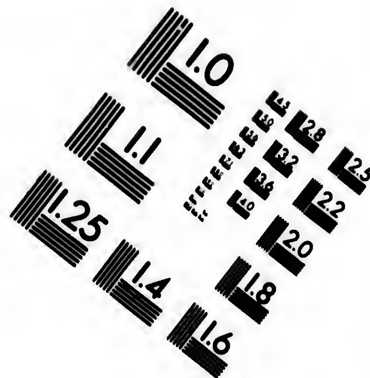
MONTCALM slain and nearly all their army fled, the governor at its head, the French had little heart to make further defence of Quebec. We waited a few days to see what they would do, meanwhile strengthening our positions and bringing more and heavier artillery to batter down the walls if the job were forced upon us. We heard that there was great disquiet within the town, that a few veterans, abandoned though they were by their comrades, wished to fight it out to the last and perish under the ruins of the city. But the majority, who were not of quite such Spartan mould, prevailed, and in a few days they came out to us with a white flag. Devizac was one of those who came, and I was rejoiced to find him unwounded, though he was mightily cast down over the death of his commander and the great fall of the French.

"I have no spirit for the fighting," he said to me, "now that our cause in America is lost."

"Be of good cheer, Devizac," I said. "It is not your fault nor that of any Frenchman here. You will yet be winning laurels on European fields."

As in truth he did.





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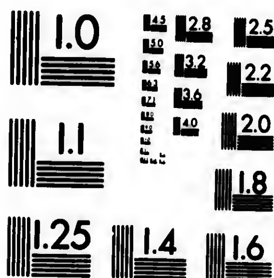

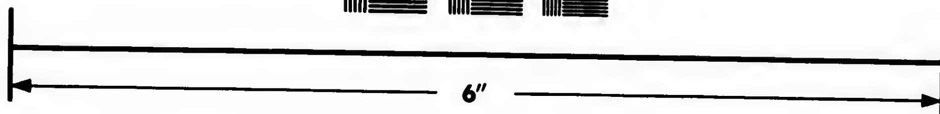

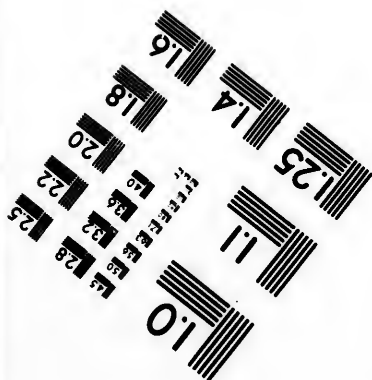
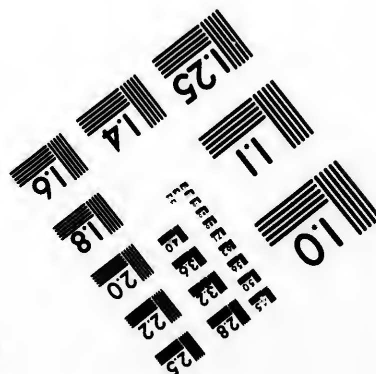

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Then I came to the question which was nearest to my heart.

"The Seigneur de St. Maur and his daughter, Devizac?" I asked. "What has become of them?"

"They are at the château," he said. "The seigneur wept at the death of Montcalm, cursed at the flight of the governor, and is now preparing himself as best he can to receive the conquerors. I suggest that you go to the château and receive their surrender."

The suggestion seemed good.

When the city was given up to us I went in at the St. Louis gate, through which they had taken the dying Montcalm. The Canadians bestowed few welcome glances upon us, though I heard that there were many who were glad the war bade fair now to end, even at such a cost, for it was draining their life blood away. Everybody knows how scanty they were in numbers as compared with us.

I went directly to the Château de St. Maur, which looked as quiet as a church. I pushed open the doors unbidden and entered.

In the centre of the hall stood the seigneur, a figure of great dignity. He was clothed in the full military uniform, and held his sword in his hand. All his medals and decorations were upon his breast. As I approached he extended the weapon to me.

"Receive my sword, monsieur," he said. "The omen did not fail. When you beat me at the sword-play, Canada was lost; what is, is; and we will even accept fate like brave men."

"And Father Michel?" I asked.

"He is in his room, praying for the long life and happiness of his liege, the British King."

"And Mlle. Louise, your daughter?"

"She is in her room, praying for the souls of the slain."

I found her a little later, and the lilies of France were still on her shoulder. But there was a flush upon her cheek which was not all of sorrow.

"Louise," I said, taking her hands, "the France of the New World is at an end. You are my captive, and for life."

She looked at me, her eyes shining, and said—

"If it be the will of God."

It was the will of God.

THE END.

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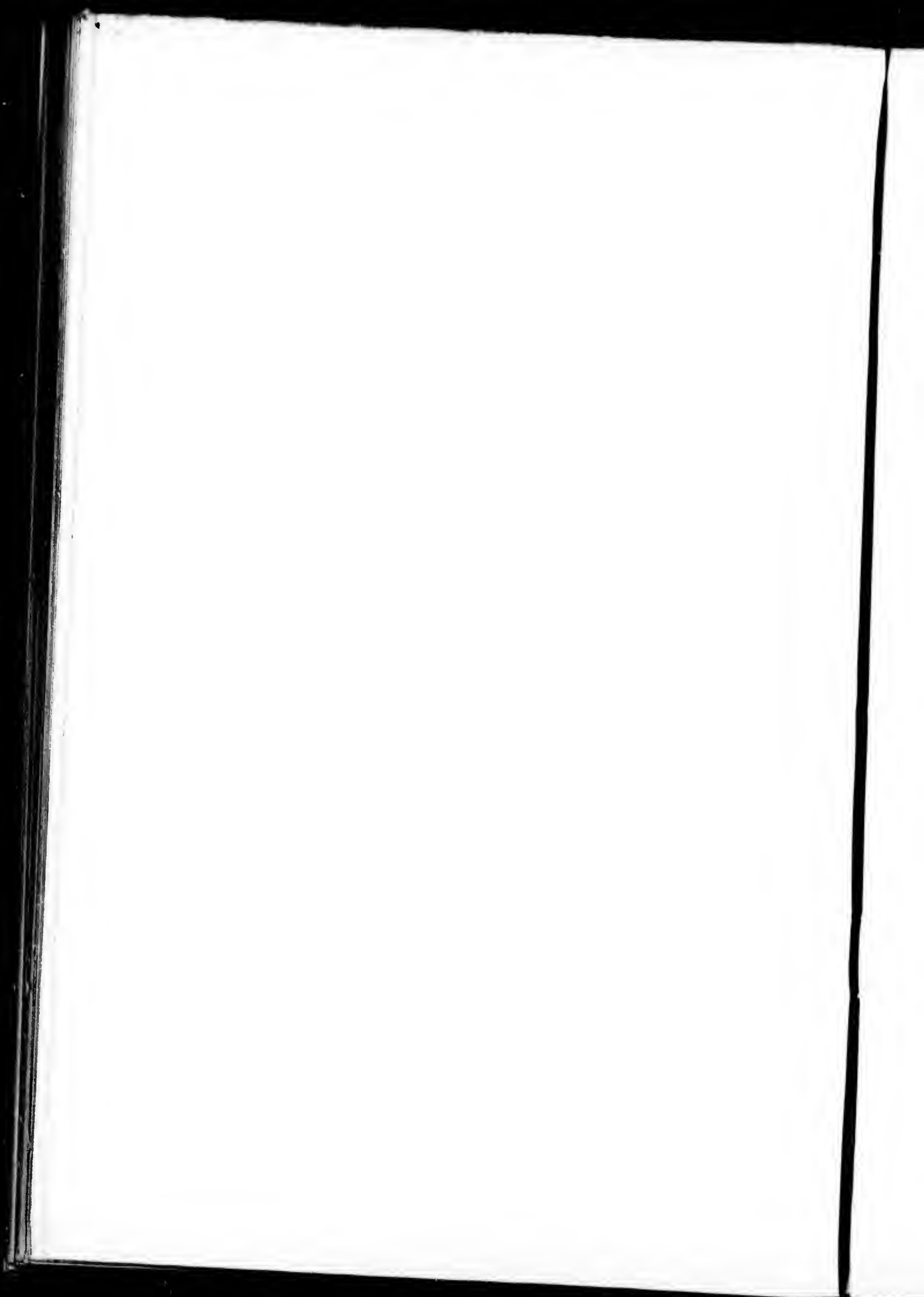

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